



A. Arnold

The erotics of colonialism in contemporary French West Indian literary culture

Argues that creolité, antillanité and Negritude are not only masculine but masculinist as well. They permit only male talents to emerge within these movements and push literature written by women into the background. Concludes that in the French Caribbean there are 2 literary cultures: the one practiced by male creolistes and the other practiced by a disparate group of women writers.

In: New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids 68 (1994), no: 1/2, Leiden, 5-22

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A. JAMES ARNOLD

THE EROTICS OF COLONIALISM IN CONTEMPORARY  
FRENCH WEST INDIAN LITERARY CULTURE

The *créolité* movement has inherited from its antecedents, *antillanité* and Negritude, a sharply gendered identity. Like them, it is not only masculine but masculinist. Like them, it permits only male talents to emerge within the movement, to carry its seal of approval. And, like them, it pushes literature written by women into the background. This characteristic is not, however, unique to the French West Indies. It can be found, *mutatis mutandis*, across the Caribbean archipelago with its variations on the "repeating island," in Antonio Benítez-Rojo's (1992:1-29) felicitous expression. In a word, *créolité* is the latest avatar of the masculinist culture of the French West Indies, which is being steadily challenged by the more recently emerged, less theoretically articulated, womanist culture, to borrow a term from the Anglophone West Indies. These two sharply gendered cultural visions are currently in a state of competition and struggle. Discussion of the problem has rarely proceeded beyond a (usually muted) recognition that the two cultures exist. An important, and quite recent, exception can be found in the linguistic field work conducted in Guadeloupe during 1981-82 by Ellen M. Schnepel (1993:243-68). Schnepel has found in Guadeloupe a sharply gendered relationship to language that is directly applicable to the representation of gender roles by the male authors I discuss here. The present investigation of this cultural field will lay out a theoretical model derived largely from the *créolistes* themselves, and from the predecessors to whose works they, or the culture at large, regularly refer.<sup>1</sup>

Beginning with the publication of Edouard Glissant's *Discours antillais* in 1981, and running throughout the programmatic writings of the *créolistes* (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant), the origins of *créolité* are traced to

plantation society. A generation earlier, however, the salient characteristics of an erotics of colonialism are stressed in the phallogocentric discourse of Aimé Césaire's vision of Negritude. A rereading of his *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1983) will suffice to quell any doubts.<sup>2</sup> His dramatization of the male agon in *Et les chiens se taisaient* (*And the Dogs Were Silent*) (1990) which requires the stereotyped representation of the Mother (symbolic of a universal humanism) and the Lover (symbolic of maternal submission to biological necessity), illustrates nicely the ideological thrust (pun intended) of Negritude.<sup>3</sup> The suffering male hero of Negritude must transcend these representations of feminine weakness in order to realize his salvatory maleness in the radiant future that beckons beyond his present sacrifice of self (Arnold 1981:113-24).

Public discussion of this problematic, and the very recognition of its existence, began only about a dozen years ago. It was the Guadeloupean novelist Daniel Maximin who first articulated it in his novel *L'isolé soleil* (1981). Little attention was paid when Clarisse Zimra (1977) published an article pointing out the suppression of women writers of the French West Indies by Frantz Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Fanon (1971:33-50) had effectively silenced Mayotte Capécia – author of the novel *Je suis martiniquaise* (1948) – in the chapter “La femme de couleur et le blanc,” under the crushing weight of psychoanalytic theory. He had called Anna Freud in to consult, as well as Alfred Adler and Jacques Lacan, who have not been seen together since. In “La femme de couleur et le blanc” these big guns of psychoanalysis relay one another to prove that Mayotte Capécia was a hopelessly neurotic mulatto and therefore not a true *martiniquaise*. The inadequacies of Fanon's argument as literary and cultural criticism have yet to be forcefully stated, as indeed they must be for the gendered nature of his thesis to be finally understood and rejected. In terms of the theoretical model I shall develop in this essay, I see Fanon as having been unable to recognize that there exist two gendered visions of French West Indian culture. His tactic was to brutally reduce the (as yet unrecognized) womanist vision to the masculinist vision. Given the new importance Fanon has assumed within postcolonial discourse, further attention to this aspect of his position will be necessary. A good beginning can be found in the positive concept of *métissage* that Françoise Lionnet put forward in her book *Autobiographical Voices* (1989:1-29). Beyond reaffirming *métissage*, however, it is necessary to deconstruct homosocial masculine desire in the figure of the *mulata*, as Vera M. Kutzinski (1993:163-98) has done in *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism*.

Before leaving Fanon, who has much to answer for in this department, I should like to point out his suppression of homoerotic desire in *Peau noire*,

*masques blancs*, since it has caused as much damage as his silencing of women's voices and has further shored up the fortress of heterosexual male eroticism in French West Indian literary culture. *Readers of Peau noire, masques blancs* can be forgiven for not recognizing the importance of Fanon's ideological investment, since it is buried in note 44 of the chapter entitled "Le Nègre et la psychopathologie." In it Fanon (1971:146) dismisses out of hand the possibility of homosexual desire in Martinique. Having observed that there exists in Martinican society a phenomenon of male cross-dressing, he quickly and peremptorily affirms that "I am persuaded that they have a normal sexual life. They drink their punch like the other guys and are sensitive to the charms of the ladies – fishmongers or sellers of vegetables."

What should concern us here is not whether these male cross-dressers were indeed heterosexual in their desires and practices but the fact that in Fanon's world view they had to be heterosexual. He goes farther. Having noted that "On the other hand, in Europe I have seen some comrades become homosexual [he uses the term *péderastes*, like other writers of his day], and always passive," he is quick to add that even these Martinicans are not real homosexuals. The true purpose of these examples becomes clearer when Fanon (1971:146) states: "But this wasn't neurotic homosexuality [the real kind]; it was for them merely an expedient, like becoming a pimp [note the heterosexual twist at the end, which evacuates the possibility of homosexuality.]" Why must this be so? The reasoning, such as it is, reveals the circularity deriving from an axiom fundamental to an ideological position: "The French West Indian is not a homosexual, even when he appears to be, because the French West Indian male cannot be a homosexual," Fanon seems to be saying. End of argument. Ultimately what we can derive from Fanon's insistence on this point is that homophobia is so strong as to short-circuit rational argument.

Why is this the case? No real progress was made on this point until Glissant published *Caribbean Discourse* in 1981. In an essay entitled "History and Literature," which he initially gave as a lecture in 1978, Glissant (1989:72-73) engaged the problem as one of discourse analysis. He reasoned that

Thus, in our own area of concern, the official history of Martinique (totally fashioned according to Western ideology, naturally) has been conceived in terms of the list of discoverers and governors of this country, without taking into account the sovereign beauties – since there were no male sovereigns – that it has produced. (Those are indeed the key chapters of our official history. The Martinican elite can see "power" only in the shape of the female thigh. Empress, queen, courtesan: History is for them nothing but a submission to pleasure, where the male is dominant; the male is the Other. This notion of history as pleasure is about making oneself available.)



This argument is, for all intents and purposes, identical to Edward Said's in his book on *Orientalism*, which is contemporaneous with the date of Glissant's original lecture. Said had pointed out that Western imperial discourse had feminized those cultures it had subjugated, in order to justify that subjugation. In other words, we may set out as our working hypothesis that we are dealing here with an erotics of colonialism based on a model of aggressive heterosexual desire. Glissant sees this situation clearly, and he finds it intolerable to the West Indian male. The alpha male, in terms of primate behavior, is the European (or, eventually, white American) Other. The colonized is invariably conceptualized as the Feminine, which can only be submissive, pleasure-giving, accommodating, and, ultimately, screwed. The archetype in the New World is the Aztec princess known to history as *la malinche*, who was both Cortez's translator and his mistress, submitting to and translating his power in both these roles.

Such a primitive and utterly unsatisfactory model of the colonial situation leaves no place whatever for the colonized male, who can only conceptualize himself as feminine, whence Fanon's Martinican cross-dressers who are, must be, really heterosexual. Or again, his French West Indian passive homosexuals, who he considers to be no different from pimps, although this last rhetorical move leaves us wondering what a pimp is. Presumably, in the colonial situation, the pimp could provide "feminine" pleasure only for the colonizer.

For all his lucidity, Glissant nowhere posits a way to break out of this emasculating logic. What he ultimately does, while recognizing and indeed criticizing the agonism of Césaire's Rebel in *Et les chiens se taisaient*, is to insist on the need to rehabilitate the figure of the Maroon as the real hero of West Indian history. He considers the serious literary exploration of the figure of the Maroon to be one of the major missed opportunities of the French West Indies:

Stripped of its original meaning (cultural opposition), [the Maroon] is lived by the community as a deviation deserving punishment. The group is thus deprived of a hero who could act as a catalyst for the group (Glissant 1989:87).

Glissant, on the same page of *Caribbean Discourse* (1989:87), specifies what literary form the representation of that Hero should have taken:

I had grappled with this idea of the new tragedy, and I was surprised by how hard it was to pin down. I had envisaged a tragedy of the cross-cultural imagination, and one that, among other things, would not necessitate a ritual sacrifice of the community's hero.

This is the criticism of the suffering hero of Negritude, of which Césaire's

Rebel is the consummate realization (Arnold 1990:xxvi-xxx). Glissant (1989:87) continues his argument linking history and literary form thus:

A tragedy of so many of Us, of so many of Me, implied in a single individual, or shared by all. But I would need the unifying force of History, another trap, and the myth of a new line of descent ... We have suffered from the lack of the tragic in our history: for instance, by not making the [M]aroon our tutelary hero.

And here is where the incapacitating difficulty comes in:

But we could not possibly seek reassurance in the notion of a unifying force that is the objective of the austerities of tragedy. Our folktales are perhaps also antitragic: their disruption of history and the rejection of any form of transcendental legitimacy (1989:87).<sup>4</sup>

In terms of the erotics of colonialism, which Glissant sees as fundamentally unchanged in the French West Indies today, only two positions are available to the West Indian male: that of the passive homosexual (Fanon's impossible *pédéraste*, in Creole the *makoumè*) or the super-male (Césaire's Rebel), since the position of real (productive) man is already occupied by the Other of colonial domination. Analyzing this model of the erotics of colonialism puts us in a better position to understand why and, more importantly, how the figure of the (male) Maroon has emerged as the absent but necessary hero of West Indian history. He is necessary precisely because he has been absent. He will be represented as the super-male, more masculine than the Other, because the erotics of male heterosexual desire permits no other representation. The heroic Maroon, as the archetypal figure of a masculinist West Indian literary imagination is, therefore, a logical necessity, regardless of the givens of history, which we shall examine later on.

#### SYMBOLIC GEOGRAPHY

It is finally the erotics of colonialism, which the polemicists of the *créolité* movement have taken over and written into their master narrative of Creole literature, that determines the symbolic geography of the repeating island. From Glissant's first novel, *La Lézarde* (1958), to *Malemort* (1975), and *La case du commandeur* (1981), the *mornes* or isolated hills are the wellspring of resistance and revolt, the domain of the heroic Maroon, in Glissant's work. The plain, on the other hand, where both the plantation and the smaller *habitation* are located, expresses itself in literature through a feminized sensibility. All forms of accommodation, ranging from political and ethical to sexual, are located here (Dash 1989:xiv, xxxv-xxxviii).<sup>5</sup> Until

recently, fiction by male West Indian writers has privileged the Maroon paradigm in such a way as to minimize the importance of the towns and, especially, the modern city, which is inhospitable to the Maroon ideal. That central element of the paradigm began to shift in the 1980s with the arrival on the literary scene of a younger generation of male writers who were born in the larger towns and cities. The novels of Patrick Chamoiseau, Xavier Orville, Raphaël Confiant, and Daniel Maximin present the symbolic shift of emphasis from the *mornes* to the towns as they simultaneously reveal modifications in the erotic economy of these authors' fictions.

Two programmatic texts of the créolité movement, *Eloge de la créolité* (1989) and *Lettres créoles* (1991), are particularly valuable for their representation of the Maroon, or super-male, paradigm. In my view, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant's *Eloge de la créolité* has been excessively praised for originality and theoretical insight by critics who have not taken the time, nor expended the energy necessary, to grasp the far more subtle, more carefully documented, and ultimately more powerful argument set forth in Edouard Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse*, and which he was to systematize into a clearer argument in *Poétique de la relation* (1990). Be that as it may, Chamoiseau and Confiant's *Eloge de la créolité* has undeniably had a popular acceptance that Glissant's essays on creole culture have yet to attain. As a polemical manifesto, *Eloge de la créolité* clarified at the cost of completeness and persuaded rhetorically while frequently distorting the positions of Glissant, whose epigones Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant clearly were at that point. *Lettres créoles*, published by Chamoiseau and Confiant in 1991, gives more space to historic exposition than did *Eloge de la créolité*; and the authors demonstrate that they have read, and meditated upon, the recent historiographical writing on the emergence and transformation of creole culture in the French West Indies.

The careful attention Chamoiseau and Confiant paid to the cultural system of the plantation – and particularly to its French West Indian version, relatively small and intensely interactive, the *habitation* – has resulted in a laudable shift of focus onto the joint contributions to the Creole language of *béké* planters and their slaves. This new attention to the *habitation* as an economic, (agri)cultural, and putative cultural unit has made it possible for Chamoiseau and Confiant to recuperate the early writing in Creole by *békés*, which Jack Corzani (1978) and Régis Antoine (1978) had carefully documented and assessed. In short, *Lettres créoles* transcended the ethno-class limitations put in place a generation earlier by the Negritude movement, which had established the ideological dogma that only black contributions to the culture could be counted. Indeed, the more inclusive master narrative that guides the identification of crucial historical moments in the

emergence of creole culture in *Lettres créoles* is able to engage critically the *métissage*, both cultural and biological, in which the actors are white male *békés* and black female slaves. The grossly unequal power relations that ruled all such exchanges are appropriately inscribed in Chamoiseau's and Confiant's text. However, when they identify the procreative potential of male black slaves as devolving upon more or less anonymous bucks or studs – the term used by Chamoiseau and Confiant is *étalons* – the authors of *Lettres créoles* reinscribe the very absence, lack, or perhaps shame that has brought the male descendants of slaves to see themselves as impossible men in reality (insofar as the creative and procreative model of creole society was either denied their male ancestors or was forced upon them in the morally violent but intimate world of the *habitation*).

The Maroons who survived historically in the mountains of larger islands such as Jamaica, and sometimes for centuries in the hinterland of areas such as Suriname or Brazil's Nordeste, continue to provide the ideal figures of a culture of resistance in the master narrative worked out by Glissant, and more recently disseminated by Chamoiseau and Confiant in *Lettres créoles*. We should note, however, that in the French West Indies these are largely imaginary, rather than historical, heroes. Moreover, within this model of a nascent creole culture, the Maroons could not – by their very absence from the plantation or *habitation* – be the effective vehicle for transmission of the syncretic new culture that would come down to the present day, despite the pressures and vicissitudes of recent history. That role fell to another male figure, more ambiguous but nonetheless corresponding to the gendered master narrative: the storyteller, *le conteur*.

On reading Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant, not to mention Glissant, we would be hard pressed to account for all those grandmothers or elderly aunts, those repositories of oral history, folk medicine, and stories of all sorts who have been credited by nearly all women writers in the Caribbean with stimulating their writing careers. None of these female figures of cultural transmission find their way into the history of oraliture that Chamoiseau and Confiant have constructed. Their place is occupied exclusively by the masculine figure of the *conteur*, who thus becomes the gendered ancestor of all creole culture. Ultimately, it is this gendering of the process of creolization that will justify the exclusion of women creators from the literary history of the movement. As though to render unassailable the *conteur's* position as originator of *créolité*, Chamoiseau and Confiant create a neologism, *l'oralitairain*, which surrounds the humble storyteller with the prestigious ornaments of theory.

The exclusion of women from the Creole tradition becomes all the more remarkable when one considers that the authors of *Lettres créoles* have

gone to some lengths to justify that obscurity, that alternately mumbled and screamed delivery of Creole language which Glissant had described in *Caribbean Discourse* (1989:xxvi-xxvii). The role of the (male) storyteller, which Chamoiseau and Confiant (1991:61) see as integral to the violent but intimate world of the *habitation*, took on the following characteristics:

Finally, he must be well integrated, more discreet than the others, less of a show-off in daily matters, possibly even more docile, and never a Maroon. Thus he protects himself, protects his function, protects the disguised message of resistance that he propagates: the words of such a good slave, the Master will say to himself, cannot be dangerous.

Chamoiseau and Confiant (1991:59), quite accurately it would seem, further state that their original *conteur*, reconstructed from Glissant's theory and from recent field work in oraliture by Marcel Lebielle (1988) and Patrick Chamoiseau (1991:59) in Sainte-Marie, Martinique, is analogous to an Uncle Tom figure.

Here I must return for a moment to my theory of the gendering of masculinity in the French West Indies. It should already be obvious that the absent Maroon incarnates the ideal figure of the super-male, necessary but inaccessible. The role of the castrated male as producer of the cultural forms that would ultimately result in the *créolité* movement falls by necessity to the *conteur* as an Uncle Tom, forgiven in advance by the heirs who in *Lettres créoles* write his apotheosis.

This is not to say that the position of "normal" masculinity – creative and procreative – is absent from the master narrative of *créolité* that Chamoiseau and Confiant have written. It belongs, as I suggested earlier in proposing a theoretical model, to the *béké*. As Chamoiseau and Confiant (1991:61) put it:

the words of such a good slave, the Master will say to himself, cannot be dangerous. A message of resistance overheard in a storytelling session will not disturb the Master: "Well now, my boy, a good fellow like you shouldn't repeat those old-time nigger words."

At this point Chamoiseau and Confiant summarize the notion of Diversion that Glissant, in *Caribbean Discourse*, laid out to account for the elliptical, hypnotic, obscure means of expression adopted by Creole in the French West Indies. Moreover, they (1991:61) hypothesize a transpersonal motivation to the phenomenon, which they locate in the collective unconscious of slave society: "A quasi-magical aria that outwits mental blocks so as to disseminate opposition to slavery, to colonial ideology, to dehumanization, in those opaque zones where the unconscious nourishes being."

From there it is but a short step to the total rehabilitation of the Uncle Tom figure, who had been vilified by all the black consciousness movements

beginning with Césaire's representation of the old black man in the trolley car in the 1939 version of his *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Because of Uncle Tom the *conteur*, the *oralituroin*, "a considerable number of slaves were not enslaved. Secure in their secret dignity, they often laid the ground-work for what we are today, and they did so more effectively than the Maroons" (Chamoiseau & Confiant 1991:61).

My point is not to attempt to establish whether or not this rewriting of the history and, indeed, the ideology of French West Indian culture is accurate in fact, but rather to demonstrate that it responds to a dynamic that can only be explained by a particular construction of masculinity. The historiography of *Lettres créoles* proceeds according to the model I outlined earlier: first, the "normal" position of masculinity having been occupied since the creation of Creole society on the *habitation* by the *béké* master; second, the position of the agonistic super-male dear to the Negritude movement having been unmasked as an imaginary construct by Glissant and others; third, homosexuality having been denied by Fanon in the name of a nascent Antillean culture, therefore the only position remaining to those who would declare themselves the heirs to the *oralituroin* is that of castrated storyteller whose language remains obscure, muffled or screamed (read: hysterical), at all events turned away from the direct production of meaning. Finally, women and any woman-authored competing tradition are excluded, effectively silenced by an exclusively masculine historiography.

Lest my argument appear excessively abstract and theoretical, I propose that we turn now to some counterexamples which, taken together, demonstrate the existence of a counterdiscourse to the authorized version of *créolité*. One telling anecdote that comes to mind dates from October 8, 1992, on the evening of the day when the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to a Creolophone writer, Derek Walcott, from St. Lucia. As he related to a crowd of some four hundred rapt listeners at the University of Virginia under what conditions he and his twin brother Roderick first had a revelation of the power of the word and of oraliture, Derek Walcott gave an account of their aunt Sidone entralling the brothers during storytelling sessions after school in the early evening in the St. Lucian countryside. He concluded that if his poetry and theater have a Muse, it was Sidone, who told the boys the creole stories that would nourish their imagination throughout their careers. This example is significant for two reasons: it marks the first step on a career that would lead to international consecration of a Creolophone writer; and it is identical in its general outline, even in many of the details, to the versions given by women writers from the West Indies concerning the transmission of the oral culture by women.

My second set of counterexamples concerns the apparent impossibility of

a homosexual literary discourse in the French West Indies. Puerto Rico, which the historiographers of *Eloge de la créolité* pitied because of its economic, political, and cultural dependence on the United States, nonetheless has a thriving gay theater. Sandra M. Cypess (1994:247), writing in the first comparative literary history of the Caribbean, points out that:

The theme of homosexuality is treated openly in all the works of Abniel Marat, as well as in *Doce paredes negras* (Twelve black walls), 1973, by Juan González, *La santa noche del sábado* (Saintly Saturday night), 1975, by Luis Torres Nadal, *Sin principio ni fin* (Without beginning or end), 1981, by Carlos Escalera, *Arcos de sangre* (Chests of blood), 1983, by Joey Rivas.

She further demonstrates that Luis Rojas and Nadia Benabid also treat homosexuality openly in their plays (1994:247). William Luis (1994:202), in an article for the same comparative literary history of the Caribbean, confirms these conditions relative to the representation of gender in the short fiction of Manuel Ramos Otero, citing two stories from the 1970s that are written from a distinctly homosexual point of view.

The situation in Cuba with respect to the gendering of the literary culture is more complex, especially because of the repression of homosexuality by the Castro revolution, but it is nonetheless closer to the Puerto Rican than to the French West Indian model. Reinaldo Arenas's homosexuality is well known. He was, at the age of fifteen, an early member of the Castro revolution in Oriente province. But, as Gabriel Cabrera Infante has put it, "he was what authoritarian regimes cannot tolerate: a fierce rebel" (Cabrera Infante 1993:3). After the success of the revolution he was "reeducated" in a UMAP (Units of Military Help to Agriculture) concentration camp and subsequently imprisoned for his homosexuality. José Lezama Lima's homosexuality was as overt as Arenas's, both in his life and in his art; but he was never persecuted by the Castro government because *El Presidente* so admired his art (Phaf 1990a:254-59). These two contrasting fates of homosexual writers in contemporary Cuba interest us here not because of the government's behavior, but because they are typical of a Caribbean culture that permitted the emergence of their talent.

The French West Indies have not fostered openly lesbian writers either, although other regions of the Caribbean are less repressive in this respect as well. Ineke Phaf has discussed the work of the Suriname writer Astrid Roemer in terms of its open lesbian orientation (Phaf 1990b:357-64). Michelle Cliff of Jamaica has made an international career at home, in the United States, and in the United Kingdom as an openly lesbian writer.

If we credit the argument that the conditions of contemporary *créolité* were forged in the crucible of slavery on the *habitation* on islands like Marti-

nique, then these counterexamples from other regions of the Caribbean suggest that conditions specific to the French West Indian habitation may have led to an anomalous gendering of masculinity within the culture. David Murray's (1993:4-5) recent research in Fort-de-France for his doctoral dissertation on official culture and the state in Martinique has led him to conclude that the hypermasculine eroticism of straight males implies – and feeds on – its binary opposite, the *makoumè* or passive homosexual. The rare representations of the *makoumè* in fiction by the *créolistes* confirm this hypothesis. In his novel *Eau de café* (1991:147, 261) Confiat has two *majors* – the toughest of super-males – insult one another with the term *makoumè* in ritual boasts. Interpenetration of the two poles – super-male and *makoumè* – is possible only as a manifestation of the sacred. The principal Maroon character in *Eau de café* is sodomized during a forty-seven-day copulation with the serpent god, Bothrops (guardian of the legendary past). More precisely, Julien Thémistocle both penetrates and is penetrated by the hermaphroditic god(dess), an experience that subsequently endows him with an extraordinary member and phenomenal sexual endurance (Confiat 1991:195-96).

Thus the super-male maintains his hierarchical position at the expense of an under-male, who must however exist for the super-male to be able to affirm himself. The curious, and finally untenable, position taken by Fanon involved the violent suppression of half of this equation, which I suggest was the sign of neurotic behavior on his part in the description of Martinican culture.

#### CRÉOLISTE LITERARY HISTORY AND WOMEN WRITERS

The literary history envisaged by Chamoiseau and Confiat's *Lettres créoles* concludes with a sketchy history of the *Marqueur de paroles*, the Creolophone writer who effectively relays the *conteur* within the literary culture. All the texts offered to illustrate the stages in the development of this new culture hero are taken from the work of Edouard Glissant, who is seen as both the principal theoretician of the *créoliste* movement and its greatest practitioner. That the excerpts from Glissant's novels and essays in the final pages of *Lettres créoles* should recapitulate the stages in a *Bildungsroman*, the history of a young boy's coming to manhood, should not surprise us in the context of the paradigm of masculinity we have examined to this point. Both Chamoiseau (1990) and Confiat (1993) had written, or were about to write, their own memoirs of boyhood at the time of composing *Lettres créoles*.

In this context, the pages of praise for Maryse Condé and Simone



Schwarz-Bart strike us as a tactical necessity on the part of the authors, not a necessary outgrowth of their theory. After all, when the women authors outsell one by such a margin, one has to give them some space in the history of the literature even if, as is the case here, one isn't too sure what to do with them.

What does the situation look like from the point of view of the contemporary women writers of Guadeloupe and Martinique? In the observations that follow, I shall be referring in the first instance to the novels and essays of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart and, to a lesser extent, to Ina Césaire and Dany Bébel-Gisler. First of all, it is striking that the women have a clear aversion to theorizing their project. Of the writers I have just named, Dany Bébel-Gisler comes closest to articulating a theoretical position, but it is fundamentally a sociopolitical one. The claim that the theorizing of literary activity is essentially a masculinist strategy has been made by others. In the French West Indies the *créolistes* seem to have made it an article of faith.

A second characteristic that stands out is the women's refusal to fetishize the use of Creole in the way that the male *créolistes* have done, using a linguistic yardstick to measure the creoleness of other writers. Women writers in the small group I have just named have been judged not truly Creolophone by the group of *créolistes*. However, Dany Bébel-Gisler has produced a *roman de témoignage*, related to the *testimonio* genre of the Hispanic Caribbean, in her *Léonora* (1985), which may well be a more successfully creolized text – at the level of language and style – than anything yet produced by the male *créolistes*. One would have difficulty finding any serious written appreciation of *Léonora* by the group of *créolistes*. In the interest of critical equity, in early 1993 I asked one of the guiding lights of the *créoliste* movement to comment on *Léonora*. I was told not to bother with *Léonora*, because it is insignificant and unworthy of critical attention. Since I had already been preparing the American edition for a year at the time, I knew better and was in a good position to recognize in this dismissive strategy a generalized disdain for the women writers of the region. In this precise case one cannot attribute the remark to professional jealousy of the sort one might suspect if the charge had been directed against Condé or Schwarz-Bart, both of whom have sold better than their male colleagues, at least until Chamoiseau's *Texaco* won the Goncourt Prize in 1992. *Léonora*'s sales could not possibly make anyone jealous. Therefore the cause must be sought elsewhere. My hypothesis is that in the minds of the *créolistes* cultural production is a *masculine* activity – the term masculine to be understood within the precise gendered historical frame of reference I put in place earlier – and women should concern themselves with reproduction or

with venal sexual activity, as they tend to do in the novels and memoirs written by the male *créolistes*. There is nothing radically new or surprising in this proposition, but it has rarely if ever been so sharply and rigidly defined as it is in the Caribbean today, perhaps especially so in the French West Indies. Thomas Spear (1993) illustrates this phenomenon richly and in detail, pointing out the extent to which West Indian sexuality is stereotyped by the *créolistes* in ways that recolonize the racially marked female body.<sup>6</sup>

Both Simone Schwarz-Bart and Maryse Condé have given us remarkable examples of fictions in which the transmission of creoleness in all its complexity – including *quimbois* or obeah – is a female activity, passing from a grandmother or other elderly female figure to the granddaughter or other young female who will carry on the tradition. This is the central thread in both *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle* (1972) and *Moi, Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem* (1986). This trait is inconceivable in any fiction imagined by the male *créolistes*, whose insistence on the transition from the male *conteur* to the equally masculine *Marqueur de paroles* (marker of words) reveals a powerfully gendered ideological investment.

Concerning relations between the sexes, the *créolistes* reproduce in their fictions and their memoirs an aggressive heterosexual eroticism, envisaged from the perspective of a more or less predatory philandering male, whose activities can be justified – if need be – through the claim of verisimilitude. In the same two novels by Condé and Schwarz-Bart that I have just mentioned, the female protagonists enjoy pleasurable erotic relations with men, but their lives do not depend on the continuation of these same activities with the same or other men. I submit that the argument to verisimilitude is not the right one here, any more than it is where the *créolistes* are concerned. The vision of sexuality that emerges from the novels of Condé and Schwarz-Bart is a freer, more open one than we will find in the work of any of the male writers. Furthermore, in *Tituba* Condé has adumbrated the possibility of a lesbian relationship between Tituba and Hester Prynne. A similarly homoerotic desire is inconceivable among the *créolistes*, who seem more and more to be working within a closed system.

One further teleological trait is worthy of note in this context. It concerns the location of the fictions and memoirs the *créolistes* have recently produced. From Glissant to Chamoiseau and Confiant there appears to be a move in the principal locale of the fiction from the hilly countryside to the town or the slums surrounding the contemporary city. This shift in symbolic geography replicates the shift from the Maroon as hero to the *Marqueur de paroles* – heir to the ambiguously acculturated *conteur* – in the symbolic economy of the *créoliste* narrative. The best-known recent example, once again, would be *Texaco*, with Marie-Sophie Laborieux occupying this cen-

tral function. She relates the struggle of the urban poor against the modern state from the position of geographic liminality that the unauthorized, continually threatened, but essentially dynamic life space that the Texaco slum represents. There is, of course, something counterintuitive in my affirming that Marie-Sophie Laborieux in *Texaco* inherits the role of transmitter of creole culture when I have stated that this role is conceived by the *créolistes* as fundamentally, essentially masculine. In *Texaco* Marie-Sophie Laborieux is represented as a *femme-matador*, a clearly defeminized role, as we see in her further designation as a *femme à deux graines* (a woman with balls). In short, Marie-Sophie Laborieux's admirable traits are represented as masculine within the dialectic of masculinity/femininity that I have been attempting to demonstrate at work in contemporary French West Indian literature. She is also called upon to relate the legendary knowledge of her male ancestor, an authentic *Marqueur de paroles*. This narratological situation completes the gendered paradigm of cultural communication.

Furthermore, the cultural space within which Marie-Sophie as putative narrator of *Texaco* speaks, or marks, her words corresponds to the teleology of *créolité*, which would have it that henceforth the creole dynamic has shifted from the canefields and the *mornes*, away from the *cases-nègres* dear to Joseph Zobel, to the liminal space of the *bidonville*, the *quart-monde* in metropolitan French terms. Chamoiseau summarizes this teleology in the front matter of *Texaco* entitled "Repères chronologiques de nos élans pour conquérir la ville."

My final point will be that the contemporary women writers I have named earlier are much freer in their spatio-temporal *errance*. I would argue quite seriously that Maryse Condé was a creole novelist already in *Ségou* (1984-85), and that it was her *créolité* that got her in trouble with African critics, who could not relate to it. *Lettres créoles* comments favorably on Simone Schwarz-Bart's play *Ton beau capitaine*, following fulsome praise for her novels (Chamoiseau & Confiat 1991:184-85); but who among the male *créolistes* would have imagined a Haitian protagonist for a Guadeloupean play? I ask this rhetorical question in the full knowledge that *Lettres créoles*, perhaps for the first time in the French West Indies, considers the Haitian cultural experience important and possibly more advanced in some respects than the creolization of culture in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

In *La vie scélérate* (1987) Maryse Condé imagines a male ancestor whose *errance* took him both to Panama, at the time of the canal project, and to San Francisco, before his return to Guadeloupe. In *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989) the central male figure remains a mystery to the end. If his destiny has become fixed in Guadeloupe during the time of the narration, his life is imagined by other characters as one of multiple and varied

*errances* throughout the wide world. As a living question mark, Francis Sancher cannot dominate the text, but is presented rather in terms of his relationships with a number of female characters. This list could be extended considerably with no important modifications of the results. What I see emerging is a far greater freedom on the part of the women writers as regards locale and setting of their novels and plays, whereas the male *créolistes* at present appear to be driven by an ideological overdetermination to conform to the same teleological project: a certain locale is required, whereas others are no longer legitimate; a certain use of Creole is mandated, whereas the creolization of the text by writers who do not belong to their orthodoxy is explained away as insignificant; and, finally, a certain gendering of characters, narrators, and even the symbolic geography of their fiction is rigorously imposed – and then theorized – in such a way that those who envisage their creative project differently can be dismissed as somehow not truly serious.

The inescapable conclusion to which this examination leads is that in the French West Indies today there are two literary cultures: one, theoretically driven and linguistically constrained – gendered in terms of an age-old system presumably inherited from the *habitation* – practiced by the male *créolistes*; the other – characterized by greater openness to the wider world and less dependent upon sexual stereotypes – practiced by a disparate group of women writers who seem to have in common their near total disregard for the closed system of communication put forward by the male *créolistes*.

## NOTES

1. Richard Burton's article in *NWIG* 67(1993:5-32) covers much of the same territory that I examine here, but it does so without questioning the masculinist cultural assumptions that have suppressed both feminist and homosocial discourse in the French West Indies. Burton addressed the problematic of the ambiguously gendered *mère-patrie* (the mother-fatherland) in his article "'Maman-France Doudou': Family Images in French West Indian Colonial Discourse" (1993b). His *mère-patrie* research examines the official culture (monuments, celebrations), whereas my present article bears on contemporary literature. Numerous parallels exist between our articles.

An earlier version of this article was delivered as the keynote address at the symposium on "Expanding the Definition of *Créolité*" on October 22, 1993 at the University of Maryland.

2. Although many scholars have claimed this poem dates from 1939, when an early version was printed in an obscure Paris magazine, it had essentially no impact until the two editions of 1947 in New York and Paris; it was further revised by the author in 1956. The Eshleman and Smith translation is authoritative, both for the establishment of the text and the interpretation.

3. The first version of this lyrical tragedy was published in the year the *départementalisation* law for the French West Indies took effect, 1946. As a cultural document, both *Chiens / Dogs*

and the *Cahier / Notebook* are thus contemporaneous with the shift from colonial to *département* status.

4. My argument to this point parallels Burton's (1993a:13) to the effect that recent French West Indian thought questions the "quasi-hegemonic discourse" of Negritude, which in Césaire's tragic vision ran the risk of converging with the (false) universalism of tragic transcendence.

5. My view of the symbolic geography of Glissant's work is essentially identical to Dash's.

6. Spear's paper led me to the "Sacred" sexual initiation in *Eau de café*.

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A. JAMES ARNOLD  
Department of French Language and Literature  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville VA 22903, U.S.A.

MICHAEL J. CRATON

RESHUFFLING THE PACK: THE TRANSITION FROM SLAVERY  
TO OTHER FORMS OF LABOR IN THE BRITISH CARIBBEAN,  
CA. 1790-1890<sup>1</sup>

PROLOGUE

The separate and rival imperialisms of the mercantilist era gave the First British Empire a distinctive functional identity, and the British system passed through successive stages of commercial and industrial capitalism in advance of others. Yet there is an artificiality in separating the transition out of a slave labor system within the British colonies from later processes elsewhere, and this is made all the more unacceptable by the general decay of mercantilism, the progressive spread of free trade and laissez faire principles, and the concurrent substitution of a world-wide and intensifying capitalist system. The British slave trade from Africa was ended in 1808 and British slaves were formally freed in 1838, whereas both the trade and the institution of slavery lingered on in other imperial systems. Slavery survived in the United States until 1865 and in Cuba and Brazil into the later 1880s. But this should no longer invite sequential comparisons, or even an analysis that features simply a cumulative widening of principles initiated in Britain. Instead, the transition should be viewed in its entirety. Even if there is a concentration on the British West Indies, we must conscientiously relate what happened in that restricted ambit to the larger hemispheric, Atlantic, and world-wide process. What happened in the British sphere initiated and to a degree set up the model for developments lasting almost a century. But it was itself but a part of the larger, longer process, with what happened outside the British colonial sphere flowing back and fundamentally affecting the pattern within.



### EVOLUTIONARY RATHER THAN REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE: PREMATURE FORMATIONS

The socioeconomic transformation of the British West Indies, if more complete, was much more gradual and subtle than the violent change which occurred in Haiti between 1791 and 1804. There, a bloody servile revolution seizing the opportunities provided by the French Revolution as much as inspired by its ideals, quite suddenly transformed the most intensively developed slave plantation colony in the world into an independent black republic based on peasant cultivators. This proud new country and its economy were instantly marginalized, by the Haitians' own independent spirit and by the calculated indifference, or active antagonism based on racist paranoia, of the major powers, including the United States. Haiti, though exploited by the imperialists whenever they could, was thereby largely spared the trammels of developing world capitalism, at least until the twentieth century.

In the British West Indies there were also serious slave rebellions after the last French wars: in Barbados in 1816, British Guiana in 1823, and Jamaica in 1831-32. All seem to have had similar socioeconomic agendas, and the example of Haiti was a widespread inspiration. But they all failed, partly because of political confusion among the rebels, but mainly because the colonial regimes, alerted and fearful of the Haitian precedent, and no longer distracted by war, were easily strong enough to suppress them. The British West Indian slave colonies (like those of the other European powers including the French) were therefore preserved for the luxury of more leisurely change, upon principles ostensibly liberal. The result was a more orderly dismantling of the slavery system, the substitution of different forms of labor exploitation incorporating a peasant component, the preservation of planter and other local oligarchies in different guises, and the gradual incorporation of the island economies into a more generic world system.

Whether or not it arose from the often-alleged British national tendency towards evolutionary rather than revolutionary change and a concomitant facility for pragmatic adaptation, the process within the British West Indies demonstrated aspects of a continuum, with anticipations and survivals on each side of the formal emancipation of the slaves, rather than sharply marked phases and abrupt changes. According to recent analysts, long before the British slaves were freed they exhibited features of both proto-peasant and proto-proletarian behavior; while it has long been a commonplace that many aspects of labor relations after 1838 were no better than a modified form of slavery, with the chances of a pure peasant lifestyle little greater than in the last decades before emancipation. Put in other terms

(and perhaps mixing Marxian and Braudellian concepts), the evolution of the dialectic between the classes of capitalists and their workers was of long duration, transcending the mere punctuation of events such as the statutory outlawing of the African slave trade in 1808 and the proclamation of Full Freedom in 1838.

### *Slaves as Proto-Peasants*

It has taken modern analysts of the slavery system in the West Indies a long time to acknowledge what were probably empirical commonplaces for practical planters, recognized by at least some contemporary writers on plantation management: that it was self-interest for planters to provide incentives as well as punishments for slaves; that allowing slaves opportunities for producing their own foodstuffs (even selling the surplus) cut down the cost of their upkeep and made them less unhappy; and that gang labor under the white man's lash was counterproductive and less effective than customary task allotments mediated by drivers drawn from the slaves' own natural leaders. It can even be argued that the terms of employment for slaves were as much the product of a species of transactional negotiation as they were of the exercise of the relations of naked power.<sup>2</sup>

From the earliest days of the sugar revolution in the British West Indies, slaves were put to grow provisions on land and at times that could be spared from export staple production. On islands suitable for absolute monoculture, like Barbados, where there was almost no marginal land and each acre of fertile land could make profits from sugar that could pay for imported produce it would take five acres to grow locally. Thus such slave provision grounds were a luxury, and slave provision production was more or less limited to the small plots on which the slave cabins stood. Two consequences were subsistence crises at times when importations were curtailed, such as in wartime, and the problem of controlling slaves who wandered from plantation to plantation or dissipated themselves in traditional dances once they were given Sundays to themselves.<sup>3</sup>

On some islands, and areas within islands, without much space and accessible fertile land a small proportion of estate land was allocated for food crops, which were then rationed out to the slaves – a system that became more common under metropolitan monitoring and with the intensification of staple crop production towards the end of slavery (Turner 1991:93). On most islands, and most notably in Jamaica, however, there was much land unsuitable for plantation production, and the most effective plantations had large areas of wooded hillside and mountain glade, either adjacent or within walking distance, that could be designated slave provision grounds. As

Barry Higman's (1988:262) painstaking analysis of the huge trove of estate plans preserved in the Institute of Jamaica has illustrated, by 1780 "only where almost all of the land within an estate was suited to the cultivation of sugar and backlands were not accessible did planters choose to purchase food or produce provision crops by supervised gang labour."

On many plantations, indeed, slaves had access to three tiers of ground to grow their own crops: "kitchen gardens" immediately adjacent to their houses (which included fruit trees and pens for small stock as well as vegetable plots), allocated areas called "shellblow grounds" close enough to the canefields that they could be worked during the two-hour midday break, and more distant provision grounds, worked at the weekends under minimal supervision (Higman 1988:261-67).

Despite the planters' habitual indifference to slave family arrangements and their attempted discouragement of all things African, all three types of land facilitated the preservation or reconstitution of African patterns of peasant family production. Hut plots and shellblow lands were allocated at the will of the planter to male household heads (as were issues of provisions, supplies, and clothing), and were subject to permanent oversight, sometimes mapped out, and scrupulously reclaimed once the slaves were freed. Yet even these nearer allotments often took on a customary African appearance – huts and plots seemingly laid out haphazardly and differing in size according to need, with female household heads dominant around the domestic hearth and the surrounding kitchen gardens.

Slaves in their quarters had a more independent existence than was once acknowledged; but it was in the more distant provision grounds that they were most able to shape a life of their own, albeit in that fraction of the week – a day and a half at most in the true plantation colonies – when they were left more or less to their own devices. Each family cleared and worked what land they could manage in what one exasperated surveyor called "a straggling way, here and there where they find the best soil ... so that it is impossible to form a judgement of the extent of it in the aggregate."<sup>4</sup>

Enterprising families not only grew most of the food they ate and provided extra food tribute to their owners, but were able to produce surpluses, as well as pigs and fowls raised in their kitchen yards, which the women sold in the informal Sunday markets that sprang up at crossroads or plantation intersections – bartering or purchasing with the money received such items which they were not issued by their owners or could not make for themselves. By the last half century of slavery, not only were the slaves providing most of their own subsistence but had so far upset the theory that as chattel property they could hardly own property or money themselves as to participate substantially in the cash economy. Of Jamaica it was said by Edward

Long (1774, I:537) as early as 1774 that a fifth of the coin in circulation was in the hands of the slaves, much of it made by actually selling their produce to their owners.

As Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall (1960) first suggested such a customary system was a prototypical form of peasant production – or more accurately, a foreshadowing of the common postemancipation mode in the British West Indies whereby the largest section of the black population spent what time they could in peasant production, what time they had to in wage labour on the plantations; in Richard Frucht's (1967) formulation, as part-peasants, part-proletarians. The Brazilian Marxist analyst, Ciro Cardoso (1987), identifying similar examples throughout plantation America, has fittingly termed this phenomenon “o brecha camponesa no modo de produção escravista,” [the peasant breach in the slave mode of production].<sup>5</sup>

Though proto-peasant activity among the slaves was common before the end of slavery – being concurrent with, and facilitated by, the demographic normalization and accompanying creolization of the slave population – it was most evident in areas and colonies where there were decayed plantations, or where plantations had failed altogether, leaving a population of slaves surplus to formal labor requirements. Such slave populations also tended to grow by natural increase because of the lightening of the workload. In a situation where the power of the slaveowners was absolute, this would simply have led to the redeployment of slaves from such “breeding areas” to areas of high labor demand. In the United States, this was to account for the steady transfer of slaves from the declining tobacco plantations and demographically favorable environment of Virginia to the burgeoning and chronically labor-short cotton plantations of the South West.<sup>6</sup>

In some parts of the British West Indies too, the owners of slaves surplus to former labor requirements ingeniously explored alternative ways of making a return on their human property; employing them in tasks previously thought uneconomic compared with plantation labor, hiring them out in gangs of “jobbing” laborers or, if skilled craftsmen, as individuals, and, in extreme cases, shipping them off to other colonies where there was a labor shortage. The economic weakness of slaveowners in decaying or decayed plantation areas, however, was further and progressively exacerbated by pressures from two directions: on the one side, by the rising concern for the condition of the slaves emanating from the metropole (which the slaveowners, of course, termed ignorant meddling), and on the other by the slaves' own growing awareness of their increased bargaining power, their sense that they now had allies and even rights, and their consequently heightened resistance.<sup>7</sup>

The abolition of the British trade in slaves from Africa between 1805 and 1808 highlighted the continuing shortage of slave laborers which was general in the sugar plantation colonies, with the single exception of Barbados. The need was greatest in those underdeveloped but promising colonies acquired in the last French wars: St. Lucia, Trinidad, and the Guianas. Slave-owners unable to find alternative gainful employment for their slaves therefore tended to ship them off to other colonies where there was a marked labor shortage, until this practice, like the African trade itself, was outlawed by the British Parliament in 1824. One island within the Caribbean to which such conditions applied was Tortola once sugar production there was no longer economic. But the most notable case was the Bahamas, where the failure of cotton plantations begun by the Loyalists led to the underemployment of a slave population which, largely for the same reason, was increasing at a phenomenal rate. Some owners managed to redeploy their slaves at the salt-pans of the central and southern islands of the archipelago, while those who could fulfill the requirement that they were simply transferring their slaves to their own estates elsewhere, transported them to new sugar plantations, mainly in Trinidad. In this way, over 2,000 Bahamian slaves, a fifth of the total, were moved before 1824, though the depletion was made up within a decade by natural increase (Eltis 1972; Higman 1984:79-85; Craton & Saunders 1992:291-96).

Where slaves were too numerous for profitable employment, and the imposition of statutory requirements over issues of food and clothing further increased the owners' maintenance costs, a majority of the slaves were left to their own devices as virtual peasant subsistence farmers. They combined their own will to support themselves by farming and fishing rather than engage in estate labor with their owners' reluctance further to erode already exiguous profits by the cost of issues of imported food. The practical bargaining power which such slaves held over their owners was reinforced by the slaves' growing sense that they had allies in England and that the new statutory requirements were tantamount to their rights; so that they refused to be moved, in the case of the Bahamas, first out of the colony and then from one island to another within it. They even began to claim that the land was their own.

The behavior of the troublesome slaves of Lord Rolle in Exuma was an extreme example of incipient bargaining powers held by a proto-peasantry. In the 1820s the Rolle slaves claimed that they had been promised the land on which they lived by Lord Rolle's father (who had brought them to the Bahamas from Florida in the 1780s) and resolutely refused to agree to be transferred to Trinidad. In 1830 some of them actually rebelled when a proposal was made to transfer them from Exuma to Cat Island within the Baha-

mas as a jobbing gang, seizing Lord Rolle's salt boat and sailing to Nassau to put their case to Governor Carmichael Smyth, who was thought to be sympathetic to the slaves. Though punished with whipping, they were not moved from Exuma, and thereafter performed ever less work for Lord Rolle. Governor Smyth's successor reported that the Rolle slaves only worked for the estate when there were soldiers present, and even then had completed their assigned tasks around midday – though at the same time he admitted that the slaves' claims that they were undersupplied by their owner according to the law was not unjustified (Craton & Saunders 1992:381-91; Craton 1979, 1983).

After Lord Rolle's proposal to manumit his costly slaves early had been turned down by the Colonial Office, they continued to work only under military supervision, and during the transitional apprenticeship period (1834-38) performed only nominal tasks. Lord Rolle was glad to be relieved of his turbulent charges in return for by far the largest Bahamian slave compensation payments, tacitly allowing the ex-slaves to assert commonage rights over the virtually unsaleable Rolle lands in Exuma. In the final twist in a complex transactional relationship extending over more than a half century, the Rolle ex-slaves expanded the alleged promise by Lord Rolle's father to claim that their commonage rights were based on a donation (seemingly just as mythical) in Lord Rolle's will. Wittily encapsulating the ambivalencies of all such "paternalistic" relationships, the Rolle ex-slaves all took their former owner's name; possession of the Rolle surname remaining to this day sufficient authority for a share of the use of the Rolle commonages in Exuma (Craton & Saunders 1991).

Variations on the same theme, with the interdependence of slaves and owner being yet more obvious, and the outcome being labor tenancies and a sharecropping rather than commonage-working peasantry, are apparent in the case of the Farquharson estate on San Salvador island, one of the few remaining Bahamian estates with a resident owner at the end of slavery, as well as the only one of which a day-by-day record survives (for 1831-32). Charles Farquharson, the aged owner had scarcely more options than his slaves. His over-mortgaged land not only made absentee ownership impossible but produced no more than was necessary to keep him and his family at the planter's level of subsistence. And even this depended on the labor of slaves over whom, in his isolation, he had limited practical power. Since buying imported provisions for a steadily growing population was out of the question, at least a half of the estate's limited fertile land, and a similar proportion of the slaves' labor, was given over to the production of corn and other food crops for feeding the slaves. In an island without any alternative demands for labor and seemingly without informal slave markets – indeed,

almost out of range of the cash economy – the slaves fed themselves from their master's land but were completely dependent on him for the issues of clothing and other items not produced on the estate.

Consequently, proximity, familiarity, and interdependence bred a delicate reciprocity, a customary balance, between owner and slaves. Though it was in the owner's self-interest to get what returns he could from his land and labor resources, and in the slaves' self-interest to perform the minimum work for the necessary benefits, it was the enlightened self-interest of the former not to exact too much, and of the latter not totally to upset the boat in which all sailed together. Even on the one occasion when excessive work at the height of the corn harvest and unusual punishment led to a strike and riot, one of the more obdurate slaves actually intervened to prevent the driver from committing murder, and, though the arraignment of the ring-leaders in the Nassau slave court was regarded as inevitable, all the other slaves returned to work without enforcement the following day, to gather the remains of the corn upon which their subsistence depended.

When slavery ended, Charles Farquharson's heirs, like many Out Island owners, gratefully took the parliamentary compensation for their slave property but did not (probably could not) sell their land. Instead, they sought to capitalize on this residual resource and on the habits of dependency engrained in ex-slaves unwilling or unable to find either wage labor or suitable land on which to squat without legal tenure. This was achieved by making either sharecropping contracts or labor tenancies – sometimes both. By such arrangements, the ex-slaves and their descendants retained the occupation and use of their familiar houses and grounds, and received issues of seed, fertilizer, and tools, even handouts if not cash advances in times of special hardship, at the price of a third or a half of their crops and/or the obligation to work from time to time on their former owner's demesne. As with the black Rolles, this special relationship was often signalized by the assumption and retention of their former owner's surname, which also sometimes remained the name of the settlement in which they lived (Craton & Saunders 1992).

### *Slaves as Proto-Proletarians*

In respect of the tacit negotiations and customary arrangements made with their owners, Rolle, Farquharson, and similar slaves were already almost as much proto-proletarians as proto-peasants. But elements of similar relationships were to be found throughout the British West Indian slave system, climaxing in the period between abolition and emancipation (1805-34), but with roots traceable almost to the earliest years of the slave plantation system.

Despite the attempts of the plantocratic system to treat slaves simply as parts of an animate machine, slave labor clearly was a commodity with a negotiable cash value from the beginning, and this reality soon became manifest. Manuals of slave management continued to stress the importance of ganging the slaves according to their labor effectiveness, and assigning work to them as a gang unit under the impetus of the drivers' whips (Ligon 1657:43; Beckford 1790, II:47-48; Stephen 1824, I:54). It was regarded as the index of a planter's efficiency, moreover, how well he balanced his labor force against the needs of his plantation throughout the year. John Pinney of Nevis (1740-1818), for example, took pride that he never had to hire extra slaves and was actually able to capitalize on his surplus labor by hiring out his slaves from time to time (Pares 1950:103-40). Nonetheless, the very fact that slaves were commonly hired out, either as jobbing gangs or as individuals with special skills, brought home the measurability of their value, not just to the owners but to the slaves themselves. Estate record books that list the slaves in their gangs and include alongside each slave his or her assessed market value are therefore not merely an indication of an owner's assessment of his capital assets, but an indicator of the slaves' actual value, potential bargaining power, and consequent status (Craton 1978:135-87).

Jobbing gangs were naturally assigned specific tasks for costing purposes, and perceptive owners soon noted that pre-assessed daily tasks that made it possible for energetic slaves to finish early were more efficient than unlimited drudgery through the hours of daylight. All that then had to be determined from the point of view of labor efficiency was what was the optimum level of work that could be extracted under this method: what was the maximum amount of work that could still provide an incentive to the worker. This was a differential equation; as many commentators noted, the amount of work that could be expected or extracted from slaves varied according to the relative power of masters and slaves, and steadily decreased over time. The Barbadian William Dickson (1814:121, Morgan 1988), the most perceptive of all planter commentators, for example, remarked that pure gang work was "a vulgar system which perhaps was the only one that was practicable 150 years ago, with an untamed set of savages." Even those experts on plantation slave management who continued to believe that ganging was essential as a means of control, advocated what Philip Morgan (1988) has called "collective tasking." By the end of slavery, it is likely that the seemingly rigid allocation of slaves into separate gangs in plantation record books was more a system of classification by age and strength than a reflection of reality in the allocation of work.

Similarly, the need for owners to provide an incentive for individual slaves to go off to work for others, to work efficiently, and, most important,



to return when they were instructed to do so, inevitably led to the slaves first to expect a share, and then to negotiate an increasing proportion of their hiring charge. The practices of allowing slaves to retain a share of their hire and of assigning slave gangs fixed daily tasks began first and developed most quickly in marginal plantation or non-plantation areas, but became widespread and almost general in slavery's last decades. The fact that the amount of work that could be expected – as measured by the size of tasks assigned and the number of hours worked – steadily declined towards the end of slavery attests at least as much to the growing negotiating power of the slave proto-proletariat relative to their owner-employers, as to the increasing vigilance of the imperial authorities as to what the owners extracted out of their slaves.

The eagerness of slaves to become at least partial wage-earners – as of slaves in general to become involved in the cash economy by whatever means – was also determined by the chances of obtaining manumission by purchase, which steadily increased towards the end of slavery (speeded, among other things, by the increasing willingness of owners in a declining economy to capitalize on their chief remaining asset, their property in slaves). Moreover, the way that slaves were able progressively to negotiate smaller tasks and a larger share of their hiring wage underlines the fact that the switch from slavery to wage labor was not only inevitable but also a steady transition rather than a sudden change. Mary Turner (1991:102) even characterizes this phase as a “cash labour breach in the coerced labour system.”

*Premature Transformations Under Slavery: Antigua, Jamaica, Belize, Bahamas*

The processes described above could be illustrated in any colony in the British West Indies. Certainly they are consistent with all that has so far been analyzed in scholarly detail; by Hilary Beckles and Andrew Downes (1987) for the “old” sugar monoculture of Barbados, Barry Gaspar (1985) for the declining monocultural system of Antigua, Barry Higman (1990) and Mary Turner (1988, 1991) for the incomplete monoculture of Jamaica, and Nigel Bolland (1981, 1991, 1993), Howard Johnson (1991), Gail Saunders and the present writer (1992 and forthcoming) for the marginal colonies of Belize and the Bahamas. From this recent work and these significantly different territories alone a convincing composite picture has already emerged.

As the work of Elsa Goveia (1965) and Barry Gaspar (1985:160-62) shows, the socioeconomic system of Antigua had initially developed in a

more relaxed and less efficient manner than that of Barbados. The unravelling of the slave plots of the 1730s revealed that not only were some Antiguan planters (notably Christopher Codrington) ingenuously lax in not controlling their Akan slaves or punishing runaways, and in willing to manumit slaves no longer capable of useful work, but African and creole slaves alike were allowed a dangerous latitude in self-employment. The Act of 1757 to limit manumission and tighten controls in general, declared that "a Custom hath prevailed ... for permitting slaves to go about the Towns and Country to hire themselves and take their own liberty and pay their Masters and Mistresses for their Time, by which many Negroes who were actually Runaways, under Pretence of working out, or being at Liberty to hire themselves, have been employed in the Towns or Country unknown to their Masters and Mistresses, and often Robberies are committed by such slaves."<sup>8</sup>

Fines were enacted for delinquent owners and the manumission requirements tightened, but the continued need for re-enactments argues for the ineffectiveness of the laws and the strength of custom rather than the reverse – as does, perhaps, the curious fact that Antigua never suffered from a major slave uprising, or even a repetition of the island-wide slave plot of 1736. A large proportion of Antiguan slaves – probably around 40 percent – were employed in non-plantation labor (as domestics, craftsmen, mariners, or hired laborers at the port and naval base) and as the profitability of Antiguan plantations declined, leading to the collapse of sugar estates, increased absenteeism, and a general emigration of whites, the practical control of the Antiguan plantocracy over their slaves reached a point where it appeared that the slaves controlled the terms of labor.

In Antigua, as throughout the Leeward Islands, managers wrote to their absentee owners of the ineradicable laziness of their slaves and their tendency to larceny. This can be decoded to mean that managers obtained progressively less production on a daily basis and in a similar way were unable to prevent the slaves from engaging in the informal market economy of the island. One reason why the Antiguan planters were the first in the British West Indies to allow Christian missionaries – first Moravians and then Methodists – into the colony to proselytize the slaves may well have been a calculated effort to socialize them as dutiful and hardworking servants. If so, the attempt was a failure. The missionaries had such success in religious conversion that by the 1820s virtually all Antiguan slaves could be categorized as adherents of the Moravian, Methodist, or Anglican churches.<sup>9</sup> But this simply attested to the slaves' degree of creolization and to the benefits they themselves perceived from Christianization. Far from leading to greater productivity and malleability, it seems to have produced a greater sense of self-worth or even political power, backed up by an awareness of

sympathetic allies in England and of the declining economic and political clout in the metropole of the planter lobby.

Certainly, the creolization process was accompanied by a growing assertion of the slaves' customary rights. As Gaspar (1988) has shown, the climax occurred in 1831, fittingly over the banning of the slaves' long-established Sunday markets. Under the influence of the sabbatarian evangelicals of the Clapham Sect, the Bathurst Circular of 1830 had suggested this measure – and the granting of a half-holiday on Saturdays instead – under the impression that it was genuinely “ameliorative.” Not only would it give the slaves a better chance to attend divine worship on Sundays, but it would cut down on the disorder and dissipation that were often associated with Sunday activities, and leave the slaves in better condition for labor on Monday mornings. That the slaves saw the matter differently was revealed by the fact that the first weekend the ordinance came into effect thousands of them marched to Government House in St. John's and demonstrated noisily against it.

Though their behavior bordered on the riotous, the Antiguan slaves' political position was quite sophisticated and their combined action might also be taken as evidence of a nascent proletarian consciousness. It was not just that Sunday markets were both customary and convenient; they had actually been enacted by the laws of Antigua and were therefore a right, taken away in favor of an alternative which depended not on law, but the will of individual masters. Though the crowds were dispersed and their informal petition for the continuation of Sunday markets formally rejected, the protests were in fact successful in two respects. Not only did the Governor decree that all masters would henceforth grant a Saturday half holiday without a choice, but the government forces found themselves unable to prevent the Antiguan slaves carrying on much as before, including the holding of informal markets on Sundays.

Though a careful re-reading of planters' writings – such as the absentee “Monk” Lewis's (1834) account of master-slave relations on and around his two Jamaican estates (1815-17), or even of the journal of the brutal and insecure eighteenth-century plantation manager Thomas Thistlewood (Hall 1989) – reveals how the relations of power were less unbalanced than usually described, the actual process of labor bargaining within the slave system has only been unravelled through Mary Turner's brilliant microhistorical studies (1988 and 1991) of the two related estates of Grange Hill and Blue Mountain in eastern Jamaica between 1770 and 1830.

Of the two estates, Grange Hill was the more marginal as a sugar producer and had a longer-entrenched slave population, and these features gave its slave workforce a bargaining power in advance of that of Blue Mountain. The estates shared a proprietor absent in England and an attor-

ney in distant Kingston. Moreover they had, like most Jamaican estates, neighboring maroon and free colored smallholders who illustrated the possibility of an alternative lifestyle, and were adjacent to the small port and market town of Manchioneal, which gave ample evidence of the value of labor in the opportunities it provided for skilled wage laborers, and for the exchange of the surplus produce of the slaves' more or less voluntary labor in their provision grounds for cash.

Even by 1770, the Grange Hill slaves had been granted Thursdays as well as Sundays to work their provision grounds and attend the market in town. There was a marked hierarchy of slaves, with privileges proportional to their value to the estate, and some of the most skilled craftsmen were hired out and probably kept at least some of their wages. When the black slave carpenter Joe (who lived three months a year at attorney Malcolm Laing's house in Kingston) complained of a dispute with the Grange Hill overseer to the attorney, the overseer was dismissed. The slaves then refused to work for the overseer's militaristic replacement, David Munro, ran to the woods and sent delegates sixty miles to Laing in Kingston. The slaves returned to work when Laing promised to investigate and, in the event, Munro too was sacked (Turner 1988:15-18).

In 1825, to counteract the steady decline in profits, the estates' owners appointed an "improving" overseer, Charles Lewsey, from Barbados, an island widely believed to have established firm but effective relationships between masters and slaves. Lewsey found the situation at Grange Hill almost hopeless. Under a defiant and powerful black head driver, John Reay, the slaves spent more effort in producing provisions than sugar. Most of the heaviest labor, such as digging cane-holes and making sugar, had to be performed by jobbing gangs at up to two shillings and sixpence a day per slave or £7.10 per acre, the Grange Hill slaves were accustomed to carrying their own produce as much as thirty miles to Morant Bay, using either their own mules (worth up to £8 apiece) or those belonging to the estate. The provision grounds became the customary refuges of "skulking runaways" – that is, slaves individually protesting working conditions. Threats to sell all the slaves if any more runaways were found in the provision grounds or to send Reay to the workhouse had no effect. The threat to rent out the provision grounds to strangers and issue the slaves with corn instead, which prompted the slaves to be more industrious, effected only a temporary improvement. Surrounded, as he claimed, by "A set of subjects which meet me on every Quarter with Low Cunning and Vile Cant," Lewsey decided to give up the struggle to produce sugar at Grange Hill and turned it to pasture and livestock. This "complemented the slaves' provision ground production and rationalised the economic transforma-

tion which they had effected" (Turner 1988:26; see also Craton 1978:1-49; Higman 1976:9-44).

The situation at Blue Mountain Charles Lewsey found almost equally problematic. There the concentration on sugar had been achieved by Malcolm Laing and his successor as attorney through importations of Africans before the slave trade was ended. This may initially have divided the slaves in a manner beneficial to the owners. But since the new Africans found it difficult to obtain provision grounds of their own, the move entrenched an increasingly troublesome slave elite who even employed some of the "poorer sort" of slaves to work their grounds for wages (eventually at up to one shilling and eightpence a day). As early as the 1790s, when the Haitian Revolution and the French and Maroon wars exacerbated the threat of slave unrest, the Blue Mountain slaves had been able to effect the dismissal of two of their overseers. But after the slave trade was ended and the continued mortality among Africans led to a decline in the Blue Mountain slaves from a peak of 350 to 176, the overseer was faced by an ever more unified "village interest bloc," cemented by adherence to a black Baptist preacher, and led by a powerful black slave driver called Becky.

In order to sustain sugar production at Blue Mountain, Charles Lewsey was forced to make considerable changes in the estate's management, which amounted to concessions in the labor bargaining process: a reduction in the level of work expected, occasional rewards such as a steer for crop-over, and a closer attention to the slaves' notion of justice in the matter of punishments. This was in response to threats of work stoppages, go-slows, and running away, to near riots, or more subtle tactics such as the complaints against Lewsey's white Barbadian under-manager of misdemeanours and inefficiency. While Lewsey's decision to rationalize estate production by cutting down the cane acreage and the hours of factory operation could be justified to the owner by a genuine local labor shortage, his reduction of the slaves' individual workload and the granting of other concessions could only be rationalized on grounds similar to those put forward by Adam Smith under the principle of Enlightened Self-Interest: that inhumanity and coercive attempts to raise the tempo of work were counterproductive.

As Lewsey testified to the Parliamentary Inquiry of 1831-32, before he made concessions concerning the hours of sleep allowed the slaves during the cane harvest (thus cutting down the number of tasks to be completed) his head field driver had found it impossible to make up his gang in the morning or to keep them at work without the whip. Always a half dozen laborers had gone absent, either hiding in the cane pieces to sleep or running farther away. As the driver expressed it, "those that had *Heart* to take the Flogging would come up and receive it and go to work and those that

none would *Run*." In this, Charles Lewsey was more or less echoing Robert Scott, a planter-attorney of Trelawny parish at the other end of Jamaica, who commented of the slaves at the same Inquiry: "They are excessively impatient of control, if you exact more from them than you ought to do, they will not submit to it, but they know very well what duty they have to do on a plantation, and if no more is exacted they are very easily managed and require no harsh treatment whatever."<sup>10</sup>

Similar processes can also be detected in the marginal colonies of Belize and the Bahamas. Despite significant differences in their economies – between logwood and mahogany cutting in the former and a mainly maritime economy punctuated by an era of attempted plantations in the latter, with only the economy centered around the small colonial capitals more or less similar – the proto-proletarianization of the Bahamian slaves showed remarkable parallels with those of Belize as analyzed by Nigel Bolland (1991:600-11).<sup>11</sup> In 1784, before the Loyalist influx, a German visitor said of the slaves of the "Old Inhabitants" that they were able to earn money for themselves in their free time, being left "undisturbed in the enjoyment of what they gain from other work" on the payment of "a small weekly sum" to their owners. Bahamian slaves, he added, had "never experienced the inhuman and cruel treatment which draws so many sighs from their brethren in the neighbouring sugar-islands or the rice-plantations of the main-land" (Schoepf 1911; see also Craton & Saunders 1992:171-74).

Several thousand of the latter slaves involuntarily migrated with their Loyalist owners in the 1780s after the American War of Independence and were put to the onerous work of clearing the bush for cotton production or toiling at the salt-pans. The owners' preference was for gang-work, but the difficulties of control and Bahamian traditions, as much as the failure of the cotton plantations made inevitable by poor soils and insect pests, determined that task-work soon became the general norm. By 1823, Bahamian slaveowners reported that task-work had been universal throughout the islands "within the memory of the oldest of us" for all slaves except domestics, tradespeople, or sailors.<sup>12</sup>

For the two latter categories, and for an ever-widening spectrum of Bahamian slaves, moreover, partial self-employment became ever more firmly entrenched. Governor Carmichael Smyth reported in 1832 that it had "long been a custom in this Colony to permit the more intelligent of the Slaves, & more particularly Artificiers, to find employment for themselves & to pay to their owners either the whole or such a proportion of what they may gain as may be agreed upon between the Parties."<sup>13</sup> Two years earlier the Governor had similarly reported (with some exaggeration): "The greater part of the slave population here are seafaring people. The crews in the wrecking ves-

sels are in great measure composed of slaves – these people are paid in shares, & they almost all invariably work out their freedom.”<sup>14</sup>

Though modest, the rate of manumission in the Bahamas towards the end of slavery was still the highest in the West Indies, rising from 3.1 per 1,000 slaves in 1808, to 4.5 per 1,000 in 1820, and 11.4 per 1,000 in 1834. The usual method was for owners to allow the slaves to pay their agreed value in return for manumission (plus the owner's bond until that was abolished) either in a lump sum or instalments – even allowing the slaves to build up a credit balance by retaining their share of hiring wages. By the system of self-hire with manumission as a goal, the will of the slaves to achieve full wage-earning independence could be said to have reciprocated neatly with their owners' determination to capitalize on a declining resource; first by gaining a share of the slaves' wages by hiring them out (having no profitable employment at home), and then receiving recompense for their slave property through manumission (at a time of generally low and further declining slave prices) (Higman 1984:380-81; Craton & Saunders 1992:8-10, 258-96).

On the other hand, it might be argued that even in the Bahamas the rate of slave-bought manumissions was surprisingly low (barely reaching 1 percent) and that countervailing forces were at work. The majority of slaves actually wanted the best of both systems – virtual self-employment while retaining those handouts that their owners were obliged by law to provide – whereas the masters did their utmost to retain all their slaves' labor value, raising the price of manumission as high as possible, and at the very end of slavery holding on to their property in the hope of generous compensation from the imperial government.

Certainly, as Howard Johnson (1991) and the present author with Gail Saunders (Craton & Saunders 1992:358-80) and Godwin Friday (1984) have shown, the prevalence of “working out on wages” in the Bahamas and the problems which resulted are attested to by the Governors' correspondence, the often frenzied manoeuvrings of the Bahamian legislators, and by the numerous advertisements concerning hiring and running away in the local newspapers. In 1808 a local Act was passed with the expressed purpose of controlling the practice of hiring out. It was no longer lawful for slaveowners on New Providence (Nassau's island) to allow their slaves “to hire themselves out to work, either on board of vessels or on the shore, as porters or labourers, without first registering the names of such slaves in the police office, and obtaining therefrom a copper badge, with the number of such slave marked thereon; which badge is to be work on the jacket or frock of the slave, in a conspicuous manner.”<sup>15</sup>

This Act (which in any case only applied to laboring slaves) seems to have been ineffectual, and slaveowners resorted to more subtle forms of controll-

ing or appropriating the slaves' labor value. As Governor Carmichael Smyth went on to report in 1832:

Almost every Slave is anxious to enjoy this species of Liberty [self-hiring] & will readily promise & undertake to pay more than, at times, he may be able to acquire. Many of them have a sort of account current with their owners; & in hopes of better times get deeper into debt each month. There are of course some dishonest and dissolute Slaves who will spend whatever they may gain & state to their owners that they have not been able to get work. The day of reckoning is however sure to arrive at last & I have had occasion to observe, in the weekly returns, Slaves repeatedly confined in the Work-House & punished for not paying wages.<sup>16</sup>

A rising proportion of the five hundred or so slave runaway advertisements in the local newspapers related to disputes over wages and hiring conditions. One remarkable early absconder was the African-born ship carpenter Dick, who broke out of jail in 1799 after being put there for "not paying his wages regularly." Returned to his owner, the master ship carpenter Timothy Cox, who had offered a \$20 reward, Dick was absent again within a month. "Run away on Monday last, immediately after having received his Wages for four Days Hire from Mr. Ritchie," advertised Timothy Cox, "a Negro Man called Dick belonging to the Subscriber, a Ship Carpenter and well known about Town. He frequently saunters around the Western Suburbs, and there is Reason to suspect he is occasionally employed there."<sup>17</sup>

Runaway advertisements frequently mentioned or suggested disputes over wages. They often referred to slaves who had stayed away after their job was supposed to have finished, and almost always referred to persons, whites and free coloreds as well as slaves, who "harbored" them – these persons being sometimes threatened with direr punishments than the runaways themselves. Some runaways were clearly seeking a better job or a more congenial or complaisant employer, while others ran away for fear of being transported away from their familiar location, family, or customary employment – such as Nassau tradesmen or domestics threatened with fieldwork in the Out Islands or agricultural laborers consigned to work on the dreaded salt-pans. In nearly all such cases, slaves were making a statement of wishes and placing pressure upon their owners. On their side, owners ran the whole gamut of threats and inducements in order to get their workers back, or at least to regain control over their labor value. From the beginning, however, the advertisements disclose that the negotiating power was not entirely one-sided. A surprising number of advertisers promised that they would not punish slaves who "returned to their duty." And at least one (as early as 1784) made the remarkable offer to permit the slaves to choose another owner – presumably if such a person would be willing to buy



them (Craton & Saunders 1992:379). Such a symbolic mutual rejection of power or even paternalistic relationships was surely the closest one could ever get to a true dialectic between a proletariat and a bourgeois employing class within a system of chattel slavery.

#### METROPOLITAN LIBERAL IDEOLOGY AND THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, 1808-1838

The will of the British West Indian slaves to work their own grounds whenever they could, and to work for wages when they had (or wanted) to, was quite congruent with what metropolitan philanthropists and their missionary agents considered civilized alternatives to slavery, and what imperial policy makers, under the influence of liberal economists, were coming to regard as a more generally efficient, as well as more politic system. Few planters, however, were won over by arguments that free wage labor would be preferable to slavery and, standing on their property rights in the slaves and their labor, stood out for compensation and a transitional period of compulsory labor where necessary (called apprenticeship). They also, of course, argued vehemently for the continuance of their plantocratic privileges – asserting that direct imperial rule in the new Crown Colonies was contrary both to the historical right to self-legislation enjoyed by the older colonies and to the liberal ideal of *laissez faire* itself.

The ending of the British slave trade by 1808 had already greatly affected labor conditions in the West Indies and changed attitudes towards slavery and its alternatives on all sides. Denied fresh recruits and faced by a declining and strongly resistant slave population in those colonies with the greatest labor need, planters dug in their heels, while philanthropists and policy makers, appalled at the evidence of population decline revealed in the slave registration returns after 1815, moved with increasing resolution towards what colonial official James Stephen (1824) among others, argued was the healthier, as well as more efficient, alternative of a free wage labor system.<sup>18</sup> A staged emancipation with slaveowners' compensation was imposed on the Crown Colonies and negotiated for those that were self-legislating in 1834. But the four-year apprenticeship phase and following few years was a period of even more vigorous adjustment on both sides, in which gains for the more fortunate ex-slaves in the form of workable lands, saleable produce, and liveable wages were predictably countered by planter complaints that their former slaves would only continue to work on the plantations when it suited them, for wages were so high that they threatened the economy's ruin.

It was not mainly the wage labor system that threatened the plantation economy, however, but the larger adjustments to a free worldwide market economy, the first fruit of which was the catastrophic collapse of the prices of export produce at the end of the 1840s. The former slaveowners and their legatees showed a tireless ingenuity in retaining political power, adjusting to new economic realities (becoming to some extent an agrocommercial bourgeoisie), and even adapting allegedly liberal reforms to their own advantage. They were helped by a metropole that while ostensibly dedicated to laissez faire principles directed what aid it gave to the West Indies to the plantation sector rather than aiding peasant production. Ironically, for most of the former slaves the status of part-peasant, part-proletarian which had seemed so preferable to slavery was now an unavoidable choice, with the cards stacked in favor of those who continued to control the political system, the allocation of land, and at least the local aspects of the economy. So, as was instinctively felt by many ex-slaves at the time, and has been more clearly discerned by most recent historians, the British West Indian plantocracies and other local oligarchies, imperial policy-makers, and even missionaries, in the longer term conspired to fix the peasant and laboring classes in a Gramscian hegemonic grip.<sup>19</sup>

### *Missionaries, Education and the Liberated Africans*

The role of white missionaries was most equivocal of all. In the early days of plantation slavery, British planters had been ambivalent about Christianizing their slaves, for just as Roman Law continued to subsume slavery as an institution after English law (at least in the metropole) had given it up, so established Protestantism lacked the confidence long enjoyed by Roman Catholicism that religion could help to make good slaves (as well as godly masters). While occasional lip service to Christianizing the slaves was made in the British colonial codes, sectarian missionaries specifically targeting the "godless" slaves – first Moravians (1754) and Methodists (1787), with LMS (London Missionary Society) Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians following between 1808 and 1820 – were only tolerated as long as they upheld slavery, and to the degree that they aimed to make their converts good Christian workers (Grant 1976; Turner 1982).<sup>20</sup>

Many planters remained bitterly opposed to sectarian missionaries, especially when LMS slave converts were prominent in the 1823 Demerara rebellion and so many Baptists were involved in the 1831-32 Jamaican uprising that it was popularly known as the Baptist War. But the tide of conversion was irreversible, and efforts were bent by regime and missionaries alike to ensure through preaching and teaching that the Christian message

was not subversive. Even the established Anglican church made belated efforts – including mass baptisms – to ensure that they would not entirely “lose” the slaves.<sup>21</sup>

Though the attractions of Christianity to the slaves were more spiritual than social, the established church and missionary societies alike were as concerned to teach “civilized behavior” as to preach correct theology. All churches played a vital role in providing education for West Indian blacks in the transition out of slavery, beginning with Sunday schools in the last decades of slavery and providing the majority of full-time schools after emancipation, with some help from the Negro Education Grant voted by the imperial government between 1834 and 1846.<sup>22</sup>

Once emancipation removed the ambivalencies of the churches’ role, what the white clerics preached and taught was unequivocally conservative and intended to sustain the socioeconomic order. Some sectarian missionaries – largely to ensure close-knit communities of client adherents – sponsored peasant-style villages, and were thus accused by the planters of encouraging the ex-slaves’ “flight from the estates.” Missionaries in general also seem to have had more success with peasant and urban blacks than with wage-earning proletarians, catering, indeed, more effectively to those who were most free to make their own choices. But all missionaries accepted the desirability and inevitability of the ex-slaves’ shift into the cash and wage economy, and the qualities they aimed to inculcate were the “civilized” and “respectable” virtues of hard work, reliability, fidelity, thrift, and the stable, monogamous, nuclear family. More fundamentally, church inspired schools (virtually, all West Indian schools for blacks), taught only those subjects that would be useful for “useful citizens” of the “lower orders”: no skills that would help them to a different or better employment, bare literacy in reading and writing, minimal arithmetic, plentiful doses of the Christian scriptures, and homiletic anecdotes masquerading as history (Gordon 1963:19-42).

Such values were perfectly attuned to what the policy makers at the Colonial Office – headed by the ardently evangelical Anglican James Stephen – believed were the essence of liberal principles. The marriage of official policy with the missionary impulse, and the role of both in guiding the British West Indian blacks through the transition out of slavery, is best exemplified by the confident statement by Colonial Secretary Lord John Russell in 1841 that explained the reduction and removal of the Negro Education Grant by 1846: that the purposes for which it had been instituted had now been effected (Gordon 1963:38).

The Negro Education Grant of 1834-46, however, was only one of the means by which liberal policy makers induced or facilitated the translation

of a predominantly slave into a predominantly wage-earning labor force in the British West Indies, without permanently upsetting the established local white regimes. The process had been latent since the British slave trade itself had been abolished, in the provisions for the "apprenticing" of slaves liberated from illegal British or foreign slave-trading vessels. As early as March 1808, an Order-in-Council decreed that such recaptured slaves as could not be repatriated or voluntarily recruited into the British Army or Navy (the war still being on) were to be placed in charge of the Collector of Customs in the nearest British colony. The Collector would then bind them as apprentices (usually for seven but sometimes for fourteen years) to "humane masters or mistresses to learn such Trade and Handicrafts or Employments as they seem from their bodily and other Qualities most likely to be fit for and to gain their livelihood most comfortably after their terms of Apprenticeship or Servitude shall expire" (Asiegbu 1969:27).

The largest total of liberated Africans – some 33,000 – were resettled in the recent colony of Sierra Leone. But from the first slave cargoes seized and adjudicated in 1811, through the treaties imposed on Portugal and Spain in the 1820s, down to the effective ending of the slave trade to Cuba and Brazil in the 1860s, many thousands of liberated Africans were resettled in the British West Indies; not just in colonies like the Bahamas and Belize with more space than obvious labor needs, but in the newly acquired Crown Colonies of Trinidad, Guyana, and St. Lucia where there were genuine labor shortages. In Jamaica, the planters claimed a labor shortage after the legitimate slave trade ended, and after emancipation they were eager for any laborers who might be more easily coerced than the local ex-slaves. In all colonies, officials were instructed to supervise the welfare of the liberated Africans, and such provisions may have been relatively effective in the Crown Colonies. But as Monica Schuler (1980) has shown, the liberated Africans in Jamaica were treated little differently from – and suffered even worse than – slaves, having only their inevitably slow acclimatization, their lack of usable skills, and their native ingenuity, to protect them from complete exploitation.<sup>23</sup>

As Howard Johnson (1991:55-68) has recently suggested, though, it is the way that the liberated Africans were regarded and treated in the Bahamas that tells us most about the transition from slavery to an allegedly free labor system (see also Dalleo 1984; Saunders 1985:193-204). At first the Africans were kept in camps at government expense, but females and those males not willing to sign up for the Navy or the local battalion of the West India Regiment were offered as domestic or laboring apprentices. Local employers, openly complaining of the Africans' lack of sophistication, treated them as far as they could as an underclass. At first, these newcomers could be more

easily exploited than slaves, and after slavery ended they constituted a competitive reservoir of cheap labor. An African Board was appointed to prevent liberated Africans being given short rations or extended working hours, tricked into an extension of their apprenticeship terms, or illegally shipped off to the Out Islands in laboring gangs, particularly to work the salt-pans. But officials lacked the power, money, and probably the will to remedy all abuses. They measured their success by the number of liberated Africans for whom they found employers, regretting the alternative, which was to settle them on tracts of Crown land, where it was feared they would be an expensive embarrassment to the government.

Such a case was the scandalous deployment in 1832 of some 400 "Angolans" on barren Highborne Cay in the Exumas, where many perished from hunger and thirst. In fact, the majority of liberated Africans once freed from their indentures and left on their own succeeded quite well. But the official attitude towards them can be gauged from the correspondence of the allegedly liberal Governor Smyth and his appointed supervisors concerning the government settlements, such as Carmichael, named after Smyth himself. The first superintendent appointed complained of the Africans' godlessness and inveterate promiscuity, their failure to work to order, their tendency to squat on unappropriated land, and to wander away from the settlement. The Governor professed a strict paternalism, sponsoring an Anglican chapel, regular visits by a clergyman and doctor, a schoolhouse for adults as well as children, a "female school of industry," and a resident policeman. Moreover, there was no shortage of high-minded volunteers, mostly single ladies, eager to bring "civilization" to the unfortunate Africans. Of the twenty children under the tutelage of a Miss Scott in the Adelaide School in 1835 it was said by the slightly less reactionary of the two local newspapers:

*Some of them have learned the Alphabet and are spelling words of three letters, are spending part of the day in reading and attending to the various lessons that are taught, and part in learning to sew. When it is remembered that these children of African parents were growing up in ignorance of all that is useful and good, and to whom the English language was almost unknown ... [we] cannot but regard the establishment of a School among them as one of the most valuable favours that they have received from the British nation.<sup>24</sup>*

Certainly, those outside the protective orbit of government often fared worse, in New Providence competing, as the master class intended, in the local produce and labor markets, and in the Out Islands sometimes almost becoming debt peons under a prototypical "truck system" of payment in kind rather than cash, and credit advances. In 1827, for example, Governor Smyth's predecessor described liberated Africans working in the fields, at

the salt-pans, in cutting ships' timbers, and quarrying stones in the Turks Islands for a white family called Lightbourne. "The Holder Lightbourne would be earning two Dollars and a half for each pr. week," he wrote, "and the Africans would be receiving from him each 8 Quarts of Corn pr. week and two suits of Osnaburgs pr. ann; which together would not cost the Holder one days earnings of the Africans – a quarter Dollar pr. week which was given also, I believe, to the African might make the weekly cost to the Owner about one days earnings."

Governor Smyth's successor reported to Lord John Russell in 1840 of other liberated African apprentices toiling at the salt pans: "In some instances they work on Shares [that is, some salt for themselves, most for the master], in others they receive from their employers, Eight Quarts of Indian Corn – 2 lb of Salt Fish or Meat, 2 Hs of Molasses or Sugar Weekly – Two Dollars a Month as Wages and three suits of clothes annually with Medical attendance when sick."

### *The Ex-Slave Apprenticeship System*

In all respects, the method of apprenticing the liberated Africans provided a trial run for the more general system of apprenticeship by which the West Indian white oligarchies effected the transition out of slavery between 1834 and 1838, if not also suggesting means by which some of the methods of exploitation from the slavery era could be perpetuated.

Though the general form of apprenticeship emanated from the Colonial Office, there were local options and variations in its operation. Two colonies, indeed, opted out of the apprenticeship phase altogether and went straight from slavery to free wage labor: Bermuda and Antigua. In Bermuda, the mainly maritime and domestic slaves had long been involved in the cash and wage economy, and in any case had virtually no alternative but to continue working for their former owners. In Antigua, the planters in 1826 had somewhat whimsically offered to sell the whole island and its slaves to the Colonial Office for large-scale experimentation in the operation of a free wage system (Ward 1978:203). Many plantations were struggling but continued to monopolize the land, so that ex-slaves had no chance of setting up as independent peasants, and were immediately forced to compete for the limited and declining wage-earning opportunities. Antigua can even be accorded the dubious distinction of instituting, by a local Act of 1834, a system of labor contracts enforced by the local courts which as "the Antigua system" served as a useful model for other colonies once apprenticeship was terminated (Hall 1971:28; Bolland 1981:595).

It is perhaps surprising that the two colonies where conditions were most

similar to Bermuda and Antigua, respectively the Bahamas and Barbados, actually opted for apprenticeship; in the former case probably because of the surplus of undeveloped land, and in the latter perhaps because of the planters' fear of organized unrest and of the ex-slaves upsetting the social equilibrium by roaming the island in search of the best employers.

In all colonies where apprenticeship was imposed or adopted, there were great local variations in the amounts of work exacted for the forty-five hours per week of compulsory labor for former owners, and in the wages paid for work in the remainder of the working days. As far as was possible, the standards were laid down by committees of planters and other employers at the parochial level. But the very variation in what constituted a daily or hourly task in every branch of laboring activity – indeed the very assumption that tasks rather than simple hours of work would be the measure – showed that what had been customarily negotiated in slavery was at least as deciding as the variations in soils, topography, climate, and season of the year. Even more significantly, the variation in hourly and daily wages paid reflected great practical differences in the cash value of labor and the relative power of laborers and employers, even before a fully competitive free wage labor system came into operation.

The tendency of the former owners to assess their slave property at the highest possible level for compensation purposes, and their willingness to negotiate self-manumission even up to the last months of the apprenticeship period, gave the apprentices a sense of both their relative and absolute labor value, as well as valuable transactional experience. Apprenticeship, though, was scarcely anywhere successful from either the planters' or the ex-slaves' viewpoint. The planters set the task-rate as high and wages as low as they thought possible, while the apprentices naturally went even further than to resist both tendencies – to show unwillingness to work at all without wages when a free wage labor system was already scheduled so soon ahead. It was because of the effects of the coercion which had to be employed to get the apprentices to work as much as the feeling that apprenticeship was neither necessary or workable that brought the system to a premature conclusion in 1838.<sup>26</sup>

The ending of apprenticeship, however, merely accelerated the process of adjustment by masters and employees already well under way. Suggesting the fulfilment of prophecies made since the 1820s, planters complained of a wholesale flight of the laborers from the estates and a consequent shortage of labor, especially at the busiest times in the agricultural cycle – for planters and peasants alike – when laborers were most needed on the estates but expected wages which the planters regarded as uneconomic. Undoubtedly ex-slaves did transfer into preferred lifestyles – peasant agriculture on their

own lands or life in towns – and this caused problems in many colonies, especially in British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica. But studies by Douglas Hall (1978) and the present author (1978:275-315) have suggested that the alleged “flight” has been exaggerated and that the process was much more complex than the planters claimed (Chace 1988; Higman 1990; Trouillot 1989).

#### IMMEDIATE POST-SLAVERY ADJUSTMENTS

A detailed look at most sugar estates still active during the first decade after 1838 discloses that most of the adjustments made on both sides were entirely consonant simply with the ending of a system whereby all slaves were tied to their masters and for whom the masters had legal responsibility, irrespective of the precise labor demands of the estate. Responsibility for the ineffective members of the community – infants, elderly, and the incurably sick – immediately shifted from owners to the ex-slaves’ families. A more resolute shift into subsistence farming was therefore a necessity. A more rational management of the plantations, moreover, demanded a much greater periodicity in the employment of laborers, so that efficient plantations maintained a comparatively small nucleus of permanent workers: predominantly factory operatives, craftsmen, and other types of relatively elite workers, virtually all males. At the times of peak demand, especially the cane-cutting season, a large temporary labor force was employed. This also naturally tended towards the partial peasantization of the laboring force. A third major way in which the simple change out of a slavery system subtly transformed plantation society was the tendency, in which the choice of planters and ex-slaves concurred, to make the field labor force as predominantly male as that of the factories had always been, cutting down as far as possible the 60 percent female component of the field labor force.

All these trends are detectable in the few early plantation wage employment records that have survived. When the planters complained (as to the British Parliamentary Inquiry of 1848) of the flight of the ex-slaves from wage employment and of their inability to get enough workers (especially males) except at ruinous wages, what they really meant was that they were unable to persuade enough ex-slaves to fit their ideal; that is, to keep a minimal nucleus of faithful retainers throughout the year and for sufficient male laborers to be available when they were wanted, for the lowest possible wages. The quest for this ideal, in the face of the ex-slaves own preference for peasant farming, the incompatibility of the annual cycles of peasant and plantation production, and the ex-slaves’ sheer ingenuity in negotiating



the best possible terms, explains both the tension between planters and ex-slaves and the forms of employer-employee transaction.

In Jamaica, planters more or less unsuccessfully tried to reduce their wage bills by charging ex-slaves rent for their cottages and customary grounds. In practice, there was generally enough adjacent undeveloped land to enable the ex-slaves to desert their former quarters for new villages and to squat on farmable hillsides and glades. In many cases, the planters did not even discourage squatting on lands they technically owned, especially if those lands were surveyed and the squatters identified, regarding the squatters as a convenient, and theoretically evictable, reservoir of seasonal labor. In Jamaica and Barbados alike, permanent workers became tied cottagers, while in nearly all colonies forms of labor tenancy were negotiated. The terms of employment, wages offered, and conditions under which tenants could be evicted, varied according to the relative availability of labor, the demand for it, and the harshness of the local laws.<sup>27</sup>

Only in colonies like Trinidad and Guiana with a genuine labor shortage and much fertile spare land was the balance weighted towards the ex-slave laborer, and even there only relatively, and not for long. In marginal or decaying colonies, such as Belize, the Bahamas, and, perhaps, the Virgin Islands, some ex-slaves were left in a kind of benign neglect, at least for a time. At the other extreme, though, was Barbados, where labor was plentiful, spare land virtually non-existent, and wages a quarter of those in Trinidad. At the same time, plantocratic laws and courts applied the harshest conditions concerning the tenure of tied "chattel houses" and condoned eviction for failure to work on the employers' terms, yet placed great difficulties in the way of those laborers wishing to migrate to more favorable areas (Beckles 1990:102-47).

### *Stipendiary Magistrates, Law, and Order*

The interests of first the apprentices and liberated Africans, and then the ex-slaves and all other ordinary blacks, were supposed to be protected by Stipendiary Magistrates (SMs), appointed by the imperial government from 1834 onwards to counteract the locally appointed white Justices of the Peace (JPs). With certain honorable exceptions, however, the SMs were reluctant to challenge and incapable of effectively countering the interests of the local whites. The SMs (retired military officers and impoverished gentry for the most part, including many Anglo-Irishmen) were, moreover, indelibly predisposed by class and temperament to favor an ordered over a more open society, and employers and landowners over employees and the landless. They were also exponents of a corpus of law that while ostensibly

liberal was similarly slanted, and in the final analysis were the salaried servants of an imperial authority that in the face of tightening economic conditions gave what help it afforded to the plantations, planters, and other colonial oligarchs, rather than to mere peasants and proletarians (Burn 1937; Green 1976; Marshall 1977a; Cox 1990; McDonald 1990).

A study of the writings left by the SMs, particularly their correspondence through colonial Governors to the Colonial Office, discloses that their primary concern was to establish peaceful, orderly, and effective relations between ex-slaves and their former masters, now landlords and employers. Many SMs prided themselves on the promotion of written contracts—dealing with share-cropping arrangements and labor tenancies as well as labor contracts strictly defined. These contracts were assumed to be of reciprocal advantage, and undoubtedly gave ex-slaves a legal status as negotiating parties for the first time. But they were still subject to the general operation of laws slanted towards the landlord and employer and against the tenant and employee. Despite the steady liberalization of metropolitan law throughout the nineteenth century, land law still greatly favored the holders of registered freehold title over those with leasehold or squatter tenures. Vagrancy, police, and poor laws virtually made it a crime not to have “visible means of support” and made the workhouses for the unemployed and unemployable as unattractive and arduous as possible. In addition, masters and servants and combination laws actually made criminal the failure by workers to fulfill implied contracts by leaving employment in mid-week or mid-task, or any attempt by laborers to organize themselves. And as in the metropole, the liberalization of the law was accompanied by the creation of new police forces, which, though doubtlessly better regulated and less corrupt than formerly, were at the same time more effective in enforcing the law (Beckles 1990:102-47).

To describe the process in just one colony, the first SMs in the Bahamas in the 1830s and 1840s zealously toured the Out Islands, tried disputes and negotiated contracts between former slaves and former owners, praised those ex-slaves who industriously and peacefully worked for themselves and for what wages were available, and actually chastised those landowners who tried to exact excessive shares, evicted unwilling workers, or insisted on payment in kind instead of fair cash wages. But at the same time the SMs and the Governors to whom they reported had a predilection for those Out Islanders who were hard-working, law-abiding, thrifty, regular churchgoers with a respectable family life, and eager to provide education for their children. In supervising the communities of ex-slaves, the ideal of SMs and Governors seems to have been an integrated and nucleated village based on the old slave units, dominated by church, school, and a government building that could serve as court, police station, and lock-up.

For it was not an ideal that was expected to be achieved simply by the magic of *laissez faire*. In the colonial capital, Nassau, the focus of all social, political, and economic activity, a small but efficient, professional, and eventually even para-military, police force was gradually created between 1835 and 1888, at first locally recruited but, following imperial practice, increasingly drawn from outside the colony, particularly from Barbados (Johnson 1991:110-24; Craton & Saunders forthcoming). This force, however, was of limited effectiveness throughout such a scattered archipelago. From the time of emancipation, Governors and SMs were also involved in setting up a local constabulary – necessarily on the cheap – drawn from those members of the community who already enjoyed a good reputation and respect, and were often in fact former slave headmen. As Governor Colebrooke wrote when originating the system in 1835, such unpaid Special Constables ought to be appointed in a ratio of one to each ten families “according to local circumstances.” They would have no power to act unless called on by a magistrate “to assist in the suppression of tumults and disorders,” though they would be at all times “competent to advise the Apprentices to preserve order” and could always advise the magistrates of trouble before it got out of hand. Ideally, wrote Colebrooke, they would therefore be drawn from the “Heads of families who are thought well of by their employers, and who are possessed of some influence with the Apprentices.”<sup>28</sup>

### *Imperial Government and Colonial Oligarchies*

Imperial administrators naturally assumed that colonial social legislation would echo “liberal” trends in the metropole but certainly would not exceed them. Given the incomplete “civilization” of the Afro-Caribbean majority, indeed, they would rather expect to lag behind. Imperial inertia, moreover, decreed that, despite *laissez faire* ideology, what aid continued to be given to the colonies would accrue to the plantation system, the plantocracies, and other local ruling classes, rather than to peasant production, the emergent peasantries, or other ex-slaves and liberated Africans.

At the most general level, such inertial thinking (rather than the principle of not meddling unnecessarily in colonial affairs) explains the reluctance to extend the principle of direct Crown Colony rule beyond those colonies acquired in the last French wars: British Guiana, Trinidad, and St. Lucia. It spread nowhere else before the scandal of the suppression of the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 led to the dissolution of the Jamaican Assembly in the following year. It was applied very slowly elsewhere, and never imposed on Barbados, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. These colonies were regarded both as sufficiently untroubled to be left alone, and, not coincidentally, to

have sufficiently large white minorities to manage efficiently and peacefully their own affairs through self-legislation (Ayearst 1960; Lewis 1968:95-288; Dookhan 1975:112-28).

The colonial office vetoed blatant attempts to deny the franchise to Africans and all ex-slaves, and the most extreme cases of local legislatures using the taxation system to deprive poor non-whites of the fruits of their labor (or to force them in effect to work for wages against their will). But this did not lead to a democratic or predominantly non-white electorate, or to more than an ineffectual handful of non-white members of the legislatures, in any colony. The bulk of colonial revenues, moreover, continued to be paid by the under-represented non-white majority in all the self-legislating colonies. Even in the colonies ostensibly ruled directly by the Colonial Office the white planters retained disproportionate influence or even power; in British Guiana by monopolizing the Court of Policy left over from the Dutch system of local government and in all colonies by continuing to be chosen for the Governors' Councils.

At least four policy decisions by the imperial authorities were more directly aimed at aiding the beleaguered planters – in the Crown Colonies at least as much as in the self-legislating. The decision to postpone the final removal of the protective sugar duties from 1848 to 1854 in response to desperate pleas from the planters was no more than a temporary palliative. The Encumbered Estates Act of 1854 (designed by the formerly slave- and plantation-owning but now Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer and future Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone) changed the laws of bankruptcy to enable the sale of estates hopelessly encumbered with debt and was also intended merely as a relief for distressed planters, but seems to have had more fundamental effects. Far from unlocking the prime plantation lands for peasant farmers, in the fertile Crown Colonies of Guiana and Trinidad it facilitated the consolidation of plantation holdings which, with the help of improved technology, made possible the necessary economies of scale that led to the nearest British equivalents to the Cuban *centrales*. In Barbados and Jamaica too it permitted some consolidation, but in the former more notably enabled the resilient local plantocrats sufficiently to redeploy and refinance their holdings that they were able to maintain a united front against any desperate renegades who wished to break up their estates for sale to non-white smallholders or independent villagers. Even in Jamaica, where the sugar industry was almost beyond saving and a considerable number of decayed estates were in fact broken up into smallholdings, a more obvious effect of the Encumbered Estates Act was the purchase of former sugar plantations by enterprising capitalists for knock-down prices (though still out of the reach of smallholding peasants) and

their conversion into virtual cattle ranches called pens (Beachey 1957:1-39; Shepherd 1990).

### *East Indian Indentureship*

Much more wide-reaching was the decision of the Colonial Office to permit, if not always encourage, what Hugh Tinker (1974) has termed "a new system of slavery," in the form of indentured labor, imported overwhelmingly from the Indian subcontinent. From the end of formal slavery down to its termination during World War I, this system brought some 420,000 East Indians to the British West Indies, only a quarter of whom ever returned home. Of the total number of migrants, some 240,000 went to British Guiana, 144,000 to Trinidad, 36,000 to Jamaica, and about 10,000 divided between St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada – an average flow at least half that of the African slave trade at its peak and having an even greater sustained impact in the two areas of greatest concentration.<sup>29</sup>

East Indian migration stemmed from the ability of the Indian subcontinent to fulfill the absolute need for labor in the new plantation colonies, a need which was exacerbated by the comparative ease with which the "creole" ex-slaves were able to obtain lands and set up "free villages" of their own and were consequently unwilling to toil on the plantations save when they wished to do so, for adequate wages. After 1834, Guianese and Trinidadian planters sought voluntary labor recruits wherever they could: from Portuguese Madeira, China, and Africa. John Gladstone, the future Prime Minister's father, tapped a new source of migrants in the south eastern and central regions of British India. Gladstone found that "hill coolies" could be persuaded to agree to work under indentures for five years, for nine to ten hours a day compared with the apprentices' 7.5 hours, for monthly wages that in effect (along with free housing and some issues of food and clothing) were equivalent to the going rate for two daily tasks (Adamson 1972:42; Checkland 1971).

The mortality and general conditions for the first migrants were so horrific that the Colonial Office was led to impose the "Stephen regulations" in September 1838, limiting written contracts to one year and verbal contracts to one month (as in most other colonies), which virtually amounted to a free wage labor system. For a time the planters tried to live with this system by relying on the flow of recruits, but the economic crisis of the late 1840s and the appointment of a series of planter or pro-planter Governors enabled the local planters to persuade a vacillating Colonial Office to let them change the rules. The planters now funded immigration largely on the colonial rev-

enues, constructed cunning systems of bounties for re-indentures (coupled with monetary penalties for non-fulfilment of labor contracts), and cruelly tightened the terms of indenture and their enforcement. In this they were only intermittently and ineffectually challenged by the British Indian Government (Adamson 1972:42-47).

Even before the supposedly liberal Earl Grey left the Colonial Office in 1852, the Guianese planters had been able to obtain local ordinances that while theoretically establishing a one year minimum, made the normal indenture last three years, required a minimum five years' "industrial residence" before the immigrant qualified for a return passage, and included provisions intended to ensure that immigrants reindentured themselves for a second five years. Immigrants not under contract were obliged to pay what amounted to a monthly fine equal to two daily tasks. For each monthly sum unpaid, the immigrant could be sentenced to fourteen days at hard labor. Immigrants under contract could be apprehended without a warrant if found more than two miles from their estate without a ticket of leave. For every day away from work the immigrant not only forfeited his wages but was also required to pay his employer twenty-four cents. Six dollars per annum for lodging and three dollars for medical expenses were deducted from his wages.<sup>30</sup>

In the years between 1855 and 1870, when East Indian immigration was actually rising rapidly to its peak, conditions governing work tasks, wages, and punishments were also at their tightest. The daily tasks, set at the time of apprenticeship, were so unrealistic that scarcely half the work force was able to complete the weekly requirement of five daily tasks (worth a shilling each), and the average number of tasks completed per year was scarcely half the required annual total of 260. Yet since the minima were established by statute, the employer could obtain a judgement in the local courts against their employees "every week or any week in the year." As Alan Adamson (1972:111-12) states, the employer "could also get a conviction for badly done or unfinished work, for neglecting or refusing to perform work, for drunkenness at work, abusive language, carelessness of employer's property, inciting to strike, or desertion." Desertion itself was so loosely defined in the employer's favor – with the muster rolls used in evidence without question – that "by this means a technical offence was every day laid up in store for every immigrant who behaved badly or could not be convicted on other grounds."<sup>31</sup>

Though exceptional liberals such as Chief Justice Beaumont (dismissed by Governor Hincks in 1868) and ex-SM George Des Voeux spoke up for the East Indians against the Guianese plantocracy, magistrates, including the SMs, almost invariably took the planters' side. As Edward Jenkins mem-

orably quoted an East Indian immigrant (speaking for so many British West Indian laborers at that time) in *The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs* (1871:103-4): "O massa, no good go mahitee [magistrate] – Mahitee know manahee [manager] – go manahee's house – eat um breakfus – come court – no good Coolie go court – mahitee friend manahee: always for manahee, no for Coolie." Not coincidentally, British Guiana was, in Adamson's words, "the most heavily policed in the British West Indies," with its constabulary "organized along military lines" (Adamson 1972:263; see also Ramsarran 1985).<sup>32</sup>

Working conditions in British Guiana reached a nadir in 1869 when there were serious strikes and riots centered on plantation Leonora. A Parliamentary Inquiry was held in the following year, but this did not in itself remedy conditions. So well established was the system of indentured labor – and so many East Indians were still willing to migrate and stay in the West Indies – that in 1877, the year that British Guiana harvested the largest sugar crop in its history, the local plantocracy felt strong enough to abolish the system of re-indentures. What this meant was simply that the real problem of a "labor shortage" had now been solved. There was now a sufficient supply of indentured immigrants to provide the necessary permanent force on the plantations, while there were also enough freed East Indians competing with black creoles for seasonal labor that the employers were guaranteed workers when they needed them at wages they considered affordable. Thus, the employers enjoyed the luxury of a competitive labor pool, with the additional bonus (for them) of a competition increasingly tinged with ethnic discord.

Much the same process explains the apparent anomaly that Jamaica (and to an extent the colonies of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada), a declining plantation economy without a labor shortage strictly defined, nonetheless engaged in the business of importing East Indians. These provided a reliable, tied, and ethnically distinct work force that would both guarantee a small permanent (and generally faithful) labor pool, while forcing the unwilling seasonal laborers to come in to work when needed for minimal wages, through competition. Being such a minority component in the colony's labor force, moreover, they were denied even the limited chances of co-ordinating and operating as an ethnic sub-class enjoyed by the East Indian workers of British Guiana and Trinidad (Sohal 1979).

The immigration of East Indians had its most obvious effects in propping up, and in the cases of Trinidad and British Guiana even extending, a sugar industry threatened with decline. Also, in providing a new work force of bound laborers and enlarging the competitive labor pool, it both reinforced the sociopolitical power of the planters and militated against any attempt by

the wage-earning ex-slaves and liberated Africans (as well as the formerly indentured East Indians themselves) to become an effective proletariat. The interests of those whose ambitions were to be peasants (or at least peasant-proletarians) were compromised even more by the fourth feature of imperial policy designed to aid the old plantocratic regime: the way that the doctrine of dear land (or Crown Land sold only at a "sufficient price") was applied to the British West Indies, despite the fact that in its original formulation by Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1849) it was intended solely for colonies of new white settlers, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada (Marx 1867; Bloomfield 1961).

*Land, Peasantization, and the Morant Bay Crisis*

The privileged access to freehold land had always been one of the chief defining characteristics of British West Indian plantocracies,<sup>33</sup> and the British imperial government's attitude to Crown Land after emancipation entrenched rather than challenged this traditional dominance. Private land that was not protected from would-be peasant owners by high competitive prices as well as the united determination of planters not to split large estates into affordable small parcels, often reverted to the Crown for the non-payment of nominal quit rents. But this, despite the huge number of new freedmen eager for land, merely led to a steady increase in the amount of Crown Land rather than its redistribution to smallholders. The Colonial Office did authorize the sale of Crown Lands for as little as £1 an acre in the later 1830s, but local provisions (as in the Bahamas) first decreed that the land be auctioned with an "upset" (and thus minimum) price of £1, and then laid such a high lower limit on the size of parcels sold as to place it out of the reach of ordinary blacks – even when the price was nominally reduced as low as 12 shillings an acre. This trend had the effect of encouraging planters or penkeepers who had sufficient capital to buy large tracts at low prices per acre, while effectively excluding impecunious freedmen (Craton 1987:88-114).

Freehold possession for would-be peasants was further restricted by the laws relating to squatters, by the attitudes of the authorities and planters towards the squatters, and by the tendency among Afro-Caribbean people to develop informal systems of customary tenure called family or generational land. The English tradition that uninterrupted possession for twenty-one years gave squatters the right to claim freehold tenure was adopted in the British West Indies, but the provision was extended to require sixty years' uninterrupted possession in the case of Crown Land. Needless to say, the requisite court procedures dealing with proving title and eviction were



complex, protracted, and expensive, and thus heavily slanted against the poor and often illiterate squatters. Obtaining land by squatters' rights over private land was therefore extremely difficult, and in the case of Crown Land virtually impossible.

As already mentioned, those planters with secure title (unable to obtain rents for houses and lands, formal labor tenancies, or free part-time labor in lieu of rents) were often quite content to allow ex-slaves to squat on their lands on the tacit assumption that they would offer their labor for wages when it was needed, only making sure that the squatters' possession was technically "interrupted" from time to time, and that the threat of eviction was always held over the squatters' heads. Some canny planters, as in Jamaica, even went so far as to go through a form of sale of land to those squatting on their lands, ensuring that the sale and title were not formally registered, and having the additional assurance that custom would decree that the land would soon devolve to such a swathe of family members that it would be impossible to prove formal tenure in the courts, even by squatters' rights (Otterbein 1964; Clarke 1966; Besson 1987:13-45; Craton 1987).

That it was imperial policy as much as planter obstructionism which kept the would-be peasants from freehold ownership is borne out by the example of what happened in Jamaica after the plantocratic Assembly was disbanded and Crown Colony rule came into effect in 1866. The planters' virtual mortmain over the land had been one of the primary causes of the peasants' revolt around Morant Bay in 1865. Two years previously a recommendation by the Baptist missionary Edward Underhill and petitions from poor farmers in St. Anne's parish to provide relief in the form of cheap lands in small parcels had met with a cynical response called the Queen's Advice, enjoining hard work and thrift instead; that is, in effect, a proletarian rather than peasant means of subsistence.<sup>34</sup>

The most obvious and immediate effect of the Morant Bay Rebellion was the assumption of direct rule by the Colonial Office, but, as Veront Satchell (1991) has recently demonstrated, this was soon followed by a systematic tightening of the controls over Crown as well as privately owned lands that contributed to the progressive proletarianization of the Jamaican rural population. Satchell singles out the District Courts Law and Quit Rent Forfeiture Laws of 1867 and the Registration of Titles Law of 1888 (all of which could be paralleled in most other British West Indian colonies) as ostensibly liberal reforms that had quite opposite effects. The first represented a general demand – backed up by extremely active Surveyor General's and Registrar General's departments – that all lands be surveyed and all holdings registered. The second, though initially aimed at those holdings on which quit rents were in arrears, represented a more forceful policy of evictions for

non-existent or dubious tenure. The final law, in due course, facilitated the redeployment of lands to those who, it was thought, could most efficiently develop them – which meant not smallholding peasants but new wage-paying plantation investors, particularly banana exporters.

As Satchell shows, between 1869 and 1900, 1,381 Jamaican squatters were evicted by the Government from 33,208 acres of land (86 percent of them between 1869 and 1879), the overwhelming majority of whom claimed less than ten acres apiece. Evictions by private owners – sometimes without recourse to the courts or the aid of the police – at least doubled these figures. Besides this, the Jamaican Government between 1887 and 1902 alone repossessed no less than 240,368 acres of land for the non-payment of quit rents. Contrary to the argument of Gisela Eisner (1961) that this process was paralleled by a willingness of the Government to distribute lands to the peasants in leaseholds, Satchell points out that the seemingly impressive total of 63,500 acres leased by the Government between 1869 and 1900 went to a mere 195 lessees, an average of 325 acres per person – scarcely peasant-sized holdings. Over the same period, the Jamaican Government sold 53,400 acres in 817 lots, but to a mere 81 persons – an average of 659 acres per purchaser. As Satchell (1990:7-8, 125-27) states, the majority of lessees and purchasers were “merchants, professionals and business companies, who were actively acquiring land to help them take advantage of the lucrative banana, fruit and cinchona trades.” Only in the late 1890s did the Jamaican Government make a calculated effort to sell Crown Lands to small settlers, and then only on a small scale with limited success, while at the same time making extravagant concessions to private companies, such as the 76,800 acres granted to the West Indian Improvement Company alone.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, far from speeding the process of peasantization, during the period when the Jamaican population rose from 450,000 to 750,000, Crown Colony government policy, endorsing the will of the ruling class, ensured that the land formally owned by peasant farmers actually decreased, and that those denied formal tenure would be more than ever before constrained to offer themselves as wage laborers to more fortunate landowners or employers, either at home or abroad (Bryan 1991:266-77).

#### THE BRITISH WEST INDIES AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, 1865-1938

Jamaica and its people were the most obvious victims of the regional and global changes following the triumph of free trade and *laissez faire* principles and capitalistic intensification. The number of Jamaican sugar plantations fell from 646 at emancipation to 162 in 1890 (to fall further to 74 by

1910), while Cuban sugar production over the same period multiplied ten times and eventually represented three quarters of the world's cane sugar total – with the largest *centrales* each producing as much sugar as the whole of Jamaica. With only slight exaggeration it can be said that while in the 1790s Jamaica was the world's foremost sugar producer and Cuba was predominantly a ranching economy, by the 1890s the positions had been almost reversed – with Jamaica desperately searching for an alternative plantation export crop and its people forced by declining wage opportunities at home into seasonal or short-term migration elsewhere in the region (Moreno Fragonals 1978, 1985; Stubbs 1985; Zanetti & García 1987).

However, the transformation of world markets and the patterns of finance, transportation, refining, and distribution (analyzed most cogently, perhaps, by the Cuban scholar Manuel Moreno Fragonals) had parallel effects throughout the British West Indies, differing substantially according to local economic variations and varying more subtly through differences in the local class structure, but having the depression and exploitation of the labor force in common, and sharing, if unequally, its gradual transformation into an international class of migrant workers.

Hitherto, scholarship has concentrated on the most obvious areas: the new sugar colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad which remained competitive longest, and the oldest British sugar colony of all, Barbados, which retained its sugar monoculture, and even reached an all-time peak of production after Jamaica had entered its period of most rapid decline. There has also been some solid analytical study of the fast-fading sugar colonies and more diversified (and slightly more flexible) small plantation and peasant economies of the Leeward and Windward Islands.<sup>36</sup> More recently, though, studies of even more marginal colonies, of the timber colony of Belize and the maritime-based failed plantation colony of the Bahamas, have enabled Nigel Bolland (1981, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1993) and Howard Johnson (1991) to shed oblique new light on the British West Indies as a whole, particularly on the ways that the local black peasants and proletarians became subject not just to global trends and forces, but, more directly, to the ways in which the local oligarchies transformed themselves into agro-commercial bourgeoisies. Under such systems, the descendants of slaves sank into a disorganized torpor, mitigated only, as in the Bahamian case, by some emigration.

The migration of Bahamian laborers was, of course, only a minor stream of a complex flow. New forms of industrial capital entered the region: the industrialized Cuban sugar *centrales*, the railways and new railway and steamship-served plantations of Mexico and other parts of Central America, and, most attractive of all, the extravagant but premature attempt of a

French company to build a Panama Canal. In this process, international capital tapped into the growing reservoir of workers, distressed by the shortage of subsistence land and the insufficiency of local wages as well as the oppression of their colonial masters. It drew mostly from destitute colonies like the Bahamas, decaying but overpopulated colonies like Jamaica or Grenada, or the ambitious, relatively well-educated and restless black populace of Barbados; and least from those colonies like British Guiana and Trinidad where wage opportunities still existed, however limited. It was an expanding flow (involving migration within as well as outside the British West Indies), the full story of which, from first trickle in the 1840s to flood in the 1920s, traumatic cutback in the 1930s, and renewal in and after World War II, still awaits its definitive historian.<sup>37</sup>

Doubtless the British West Indian labor migrants of the last third of the nineteenth century were victims of blind and indifferent supernational forces (the first awareness of which, along with the germs of a matching proletarian consciousness, were to emerge only with World War I and the Great Depression), but they were voluntarily taking up options that in prospect and initially at least were preferable to conditions in their home islands. Emigration in most cases was a sociopolitical safety valve, and the money brought back or sent back by settled migrants was an important contribution to the economies of impoverished homelands. As Bonham Richardson (1985), Woodville Marshall (1987), and Cecilia Karch (1980, 1982, 1983) have shown in the case of remittances of "Panama money" to Barbados, these financed the first substantial wave of smallholding and houselot purchases by Barbadian blacks, and helped to keep afloat and even expand the regional mini-capitalism of the white Barbadian agrocommercial bourgeoisie. The latter operated through banks and insurance companies and the control of the local wholesale trade as well as the ownership of virtually all agricultural land (Chamberlain 1991).

Elsewhere too the meagre flow of outside wages may have helped to loosen somewhat the stranglehold of local capitalism by providing an injection of cash into the popular and folk systems of saving and banking. Even in the Bahamas, there seem to have been the first gains by the blacks in the perennial struggle with the government and the Bay Street legislators over the control of the people's friendly and savings societies. For the first time blacks also gained a precarious toehold on the lower end of the capitalist economy; through craftsmen's shops, retail stores, specialist services (such as livery stables, boat carriage, and undertaking), renting houses, subdividing landlots, and managing technically illicit forms of saving and gambling.

These token advances (or subdivision of the underclass), the anodyne of a

marginally increased cash flow, and the often illusory prospects of gains from migrant labor, as much as the increased efficiency of the forces of law and order and the other features of liberal hegemonic legerdemain already discussed, account for the success of the British West Indian ruling class, as measured by the general decline in the incidence of popular unrest towards the end of the nineteenth century. The British Caribbean was certainly not as quiescent after slavery as the emancipationists wished to believe, and recent scholarship has rightly emphasized the popular explosions that punctuated each colony's history. But these uprisings were most numerous in the earlier years, more or less climaxed in the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, and can be broadly classified as the British West Indian equivalents of peasants' revolts – bearing, indeed, more similarities in common with the “proto-peasant” late slave rebellions of 1816, 1823, and 1831-32 than true proletarian upheavals (Craton 1988).

The earliest of such localized uprisings was probably the “Guerre Nègre” of 1844 in Dominica, recently analyzed by Russell Chace (1988). This seems to have exhibited most of the characteristics of later turmoils, such as in St. Lucia in 1849 (which still await their historian), and of the “Vox Populi” riots in St. Vincent of 1862, studied by Woodville Marshall (1983), and the much better known and well-studied Jamaican Rebellion of 1865.<sup>36</sup> All of these upheavals were triggered by short-term hardships and antipathy towards unpopular government measures, particularly taxation, and brutal behavior by the colonial police. In all there was some element of anti-white racialism. In the Jamaican case at least there was the additional complication of religious revivalism. But all manifestations were basically fuelled by deep-seated grievances predictable among a predominantly peasant population. In all cases, there was animosity over the shortage of land and its retention or monopolization by an unfriendly government and absentee landlords, over the terms imposed upon sharecropping metayers and labor tenants, and by the difficulties experienced among peasant farmers to obtain either a fair return for their produce or equitable treatment in the local courts.

Though even the Dominican, St. Lucian, Vincentian, and Jamaican outbreaks included grievances over wage labor conditions, it were the Angel Gabriel Riots in Demerara in 1856 and the Barbadian Federation Riots of 1876 which first exhibited (for those who wish to find them) some of the necessary elements of proletarian rather than peasant uprisings. Though they were set off by seemingly irrelevant occurrences or issues (which have tended to distract most subsequent commentators), both outbreaks occurred in colonies in which plantations and plantocracies remained dominant, and they spread with almost spontaneous combustion among planta-

tion populations suffering cruel hardships and oppression by the master class. They also (like all slave revolts and most nineteenth-century popular uprisings) were suppressed with exemplary rigor by the united forces of government and the local white militias.

In the Demerara case, John Sayers Orr, a revivalist radical preacher returning from abroad – nicknamed the Angel Gabriel for his habit of announcing a sermon at street corners by blowing on a trumpet – retailed a heady mixture of populist rhetoric and anti-Catholic millenarianism. But he could scarcely have had an inkling of the way his demagoguery was to ignite the smouldering grievances of poor urban wage-earners, plantation laborers, and part-peasant seasonal workers alike. The ensuing riots focused on the retail shops owned by Catholic Portuguese immigrants, who had themselves graduated from plantation labor but were now, as petty bourgeois middlemen, surrogate targets for the white wholesale merchants. Thus, it might be argued, the nascent Guianese proletariat was striking out at both elements of its oppressive ruling class: the plantation landowners and the commercial bourgeoisie (Craton 1988:146-50).

The Barbadian explosion of 1876 was even more obviously the spontaneous collective action of a subject labor force against its oppressive employers. As the subsequent official inquiry disclosed (without formally acknowledging it) the lack of land and alternative employment and the system of labor tenancies were so absolute that with declining profits in the sugar monoculture, wages were everywhere below the subsistence level, and deaths from starvation not uncommon. Coupled with this were an inequitable justice system, a harsh police regime, disgraceful conditions in prisons and workhouses, and almost no social services save a rudimentary education system, not to mention a complete lack of political representation for the working class in a colony that prided itself on having the second oldest self-legislating system in the British Empire. The ostensible or original cause of the uprising was the opposition by the plantocrats to an imperial scheme to include Barbados within a federation of the Windward Islands. Rather optimistically placing confidence in the wishy-washy liberal Governor Pope Hennessey sent by London to promote the federation scheme, the Bridgetown blacks initiated riots in favor of federation and other reforms, that quickly led to a conflagration throughout the island.

No doubt most black Barbadians took up the Federation issue on the simple principle that if it was opposed by the white plantocracy and supported by a liberal-sounding Governor, it must be good. The real issues, of course, went far deeper. Nonetheless, there were at least two aspects of the Federation proposal which were basically attractive to Barbadian blacks (and equally unattractive to their masters): almost certainly it would lead to

a general dilution of the power of the white plantocracy and more specifically, it would facilitate emigration of Barbadians to greener pastures which hitherto had been resolutely denied them by their legislative masters (Craton 1988:155-61; Hamilton 1956; Levy 1980; Belle 1984).

Yet this is almost special pleading. Over the entire area and period, only in those colonies or areas where plantations continued to be dominant and relatively successful and in the small craftsmen and wharfinger sections of the few port towns can we look for true proto-proletarian activism, the necessary leadership, and the first faint emergence of a proletarian consciousness, in the form of strikes, formal combinations, and the first tentative ventures into polemic writing and speaking. Before his assassination, Walter Rodney made what he could of the evidence for such activity in his brilliant study of workers in British Guiana from the 1880s to 1905. But only if he had been spared to carry his story forward at least another three decades might he have been able to entitle his book "The Making of the Guyanese Working Class," rather than simply *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905* (1981).<sup>39</sup>

Sugar workers were rarely quiescent and always resisted the employers' attempts to lower wages and raise workloads. In British Guiana they often struck and were even more often disorderly, and on sugar plantations everywhere similar manifestations sometimes occurred. But the sugar workers were nearly always divided and disorganized. The system, as in slavery days, cleverly divided the elite from the ordinary workers, the factory workers from the field laborers. Now the divisions were exacerbated by differences between permanent and seasonal workers, between the indentured contract workers and wage laborers, and between East Indians and Creole blacks. Beyond this, plantation workers almost never found common cause with peasant farmers or townsfolk even of their own ethnicity. Consequently, what industrial action occurred was almost bound to be defeated, even without the overwhelming control by the masters of the law, the courts, and the police.

There were no truly successful strikes anywhere in the British West Indies in the nineteenth century, and it was only in the 1890s that the first faltering steps were made towards forming trade unions, beginning with the carpenter E.A. Trotz's Guianese Patriotic Club and Mechanics Union of 1890, the Trinidad Working Men's Association of 1894, and the Jamaican Carpenters, Bricklayers & Painters Union of 1898 (Lewis 1939; Hart 1973). Thus, it is possible to argue that even in the nearest equivalents to a true proletarian sector in the British West Indies, resistance was always inchoate throughout the nineteenth century; while among the remainder of the people, except for occasional spontaneous small-scale eruptions equivalent to peasant

revolts for the first few decades after slavery ended, quiescence and acceptance rather than organized resistance was the rule.

As the Norman Commission was to notice in 1897, it was certainly not any advance in economic, health, and educational conditions (which were almost uniformly disgraceful) that accounted for the placidity of the ordinary British West Indian – though the commissioners opted for the torpor of hopelessness rather than any more subtle cause. That there were more likely reasons – the division between peasant and proletarian elements, competition and division within the workforce itself, an inability to organize, and above all the lack of a class consciousness – remained masked. This accounted for the fact that the Commission was able once more to concentrate on only one section of the people, recommending improvements in the peasant rather than wage sector (and trifling improvements at that), while almost ignoring the faults of the system of wage-employment and the continued dominance of the land-owning class, and resolutely refusing to recommend any political changes at all. Those who are not purblind admirers of Sydney Olivier, allegedly the most progressive member of the Norman Commission, might even argue that his advocacy of the West Indian peasantry was merely one more hegemonic tactic; dividing in order to continue to rule, or even stave off revolution, by favoring the least against the most dangerous elements in the populace.<sup>40</sup>

More radical and fundamental change was to await the Caribbean-wide ferment of the 1930s, and the catalysts of World War II and Britain's related decline in the will and ability to sustain a formal empire. Whether this, however, really represented the final emergence of a dialectic between classes, let alone a triumph of the underclass over the capitalist bourgeoisie, remains, to say the least, open to debate.

## NOTES

1. This paper complements a rather more bibliographic study of the transition throughout the entire Caribbean given at the LASA annual meeting in Washington, April 1991; see Craton 1992b (and 1992a for a translation into Portuguese). Unfortunately, both the bibliography and this paper were prepared before the contributions to the major conference "From Chattel to Wage Slavery" held at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, May 1991 became available. These were scheduled for publication in 1993.

2. Ligon 1657; Leslie 1740; Belgrove 1755; Martin 1756; Long 1774; Luffman 1788; Dickson 1789; Beckford 1790; Moreton 1790; Edwards 1793; Pinckard 1806; Roughley 1823; Barclay 1826; M'Mahon 1839; Abrahams & Szwed 1983; Turner 1988 and 1991; and Morgan 1991.

3. See Beckles & Downes (1987); Beckles & Watson (1987); Beckles (1989 a and b, and 1990).

4. British Sessional Papers (hereafter B.S.P.) 1832, XX (721) 385 and 261.



5. As Sidney Mintz (1979:225, 240-41) has generously pointed out, credit for the recognition of the phenomena associated with the "peasant breach" should perhaps go to George Cumper, for an article published in 1959.
6. This, of course, was the reality behind the myth of intentional slave breeding, the stuff of sensational novelists such as Kyle Onstott, afforded near respectability by Richard Sutch (1975), but deflated in one alleged Caribbean case by David Lowenthal & Colin Clarke (1977).
7. In her recent study of Vere parish, Jamaica, Mary Turner (1991:102-3) has argued that the jobbing gang system increased in reverse correlation to declining planters' fortunes, following the "debt crisis" initiated in the 1760s; that it involved opportunistic upwardly mobile whites (who later tended to be pen-keepers rather than planters); and that the interest of owners of jobbing slaves to fulfill seasonal labor shortages neatly coincided with the interests of established plantation slaves to perform less work and "negotiate" the terms of their labor by different forms of "resistance."
8. Laws of Antigua 1757, Act No. 212, November 25, 1757, clause 9; quoted in Gaspar (1985:160-62).
9. Hamilton College, New York, Beinecke Collection, Antigua Plantation Papers n.d.
10. B.S.P. 1831-32, pp. 18-21.
11. Like the Bahamian slaves, those of Belize were allowed to carry guns, and the lumber cutting crews had much the same practical freedom as black Bahamian mariners. Though timber extraction left little spare time for provision ground cultivation throughout the year, those Belizean slaves who could market their surplus produce. As reported by Henderson in 1809, not only were timber crews allocated work by tasks, but when employed by their owners on their Saturday off-day, were paid "the established rate" of three shillings and fourpence a day, either in cash or kind (Bolland 1991:13).
12. An Official letter from the Commissioners of Correspondence of the Bahama Islands, Nassau, 1823; quoted in Higman (1984:179) Craton & Saunders (1992:258-59).
13. Colonial Office (hereafter C.O.) 23/87, Smyth to Goderich, August 9, 1832, pp. 302, 377-78. See also Craton & Saunders (1992:377-78) and Johnson (1991:5).
14. C.O. 23/82, Smyth to Murray, March 8, 1830, p. 6; see also Johnson (1991:6). The practice of slaves earning a share as mariners on privateering ships dated at least from 1748, when it was noted by Governor Tinker. At that time, he complained, no one wished to till the soil, "especially in these times when a Common Seaman, nay a Negroe Slave, shall step on board a Privateer and in a Six Week Cruise return often with a Booty of a hundred pound sterling to his share" (Craton & Saunders 1992:147).
15. B.S.P. 1816, p. 32 and Higman (1984:245).
16. C.O. 23/86, Smyth to Goderich, August 2, 1832; see also Johnson (1991:10).
17. *Bahama Gazette*, June 23, 1799; Craton & Saunders (1992:378-84).
18. Smith 1776; Williams 1944; Craton 1974; Drescher 1977 and 1987; Davis 1984; Blackburn 1988; Ward 1988; Carrington 1988.
19. Green 1976 and 1984; Bolland 1981, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991; Riviere 1972; Levy 1980; Moore 1987; Holt 1992.
20. The problems and possible value of Christianizing slaves were both neatly encapsulated in a proclamation by Sir John Heydon, Governor of Bermuda, as early as 1669: "Masters and Servants are hereby advised, and in the kings name required to live in peace, mutuall love and

respect to each other. Servants submitting to the condition wherein God hath placed them. And such Negroes as formerlie, or lately bin baptized by severall Ministers, should not thereby think themselves free from their Masters and Owners, but rather, by the means of their Christian profession, obliged to a more strict bond of fidelity and service" (Lefroy 1877-79, II:293-94).

21. Though founded in 1799, the Anglican Church Missionary Society did little active proselytizing until the 1820s. The most energetic baptizer of slaves (at two shillings and sixpence a head) was Rev. G.W. Bridges, notorious as founder of the Colonial Church Union, under the auspices of which while Jamaican Anglicans persecuted black Jamaican sectarians, especially Baptists (Craton 1982; Turner 1982).

22. The spirit of missionary teaching was captured by Rev. John Wray, of the London Missionary Society in Demerara in 1827: "A religious education only can prepare the negroes for a state of freedom and the general diffusion of true Christianity and good laws to encouraging Industry." Wray also utilized a socializing catechism for his charges which included the following questions and answers: "Q. 5: Suppose a servant or slave meets with an unfeeling master, does this lessen the duty of respect? A: By no means, for it is the command of God. I Peter 2: 18-19, 'Servants shall be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward...' Q. 8: What is the duty of servants as to the property of their masters? A: To keep from and watch against the sin of theft, waste and negligence, and to be as careful of their master's property as if it were their own." Council for World Missions Archives (formerly L.M.S. Papers), School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Rev. John Wray, Demerara, to London 1827, Incoming Letters, Boxes 1-11, 1807-1894, 5.

23. The general study of liberated Africans in the British West Indies is a great work yet to be accomplished (Schuler 1986; Wood 1981).

24. C.O. 23/94, *Bahama Argus*, November 11, 1835. See also Craton & Saunders (forthcoming).

25. C.O. 23/76, Grant to Goderich, No. 9, September 26, 1827; 23/107, Cockburn to Russell, No. 20, April 6, 1840. See also Johnson 1991:84-109.

26. Burn 1937; Hall 1953; Green 1969; Marshall 1971, 1985; Wilmot 1984a, 1984b.

27. Another index, of course, was the relative availability of land, normally measured by its price. This varied from £1 per acre in parts of British Guiana, to maxima of £13 in Trinidad, £25 in Jamaica, and £200 in Barbados. Craton & Walvin 1970; Higman (1988:286); Beckles (1990:108-16); Marshall, Marshall & Gibbs (1975:88-104); Levy 1980; Gibbs 1987; Chamberlain 1991.

28. *Royal Gazette*, April 6, 1835, Colebrooke to Sms Donald McLean and Hector Murro.

29. Weller 1968; Adamson 1972; Mandle 1973; Tinker 1974; Sohal 1979; Haraksingh 1981; Rodney 1981.

30. B.S.P. 1851, 39(624), pp. 559-60; Adamson 1972:52-54.

31. See also B.S.P. 1859, 20(31), p. 93 and 1871, 20(393), p. 118.

32. One of Adamson's (1972:263) underlying themes is well expressed in his statement, "A fear of the masses ... lies at the heart of Victorian liberalism and of Victorian colonial policy."

33. This access stemmed largely from the planters' manipulation of the head right and quit rent system to their own advantage, and led to the establishment of land title registries long in advance of Britain.

34. *Morning Journal* (Jamaica) September 15, 1865, Letter to Her Majesty from the Poor People of St. Ann, Jamaica; C.O. 137/222, 1865 The Queen's Advice, Dispatch from Cardwell to Eyre, Printed in Underhill 1866.
35. Eisner (1961:220); Satchell (1990:7-8, 125-27); Satchell 1991; Holt (1992:403-6).
36. Lewis 1936; Hall 1971; Marshall 1965; Marshall, Marshall & Gibbs 1975; Chace 1988; Lewis 1990.
37. Newton 1973, 1977, 1984, 1987; History Task Force 1979; Petras 1988; Richardson 1983, 1985, 1989.
38. B.S.P. Reports 1866, XXX, Report of the Jamaican Royal Commission. Olivier 1933; Hall 1959; Semmel 1962; Dutton 1967; Campbell 1976; Schuler 1980; Heuman 1981; Simmonds 1982; Chace 1984, 1986, 1989; Brereton 1984.
39. The book, however, is as Walter Rodney planned it. The manuscript was delivered to Johns Hopkins University Press a few months, and revised in prison a few weeks, before Rodney was blown up in his car in June 1980. Published in 1981, it received the triennial Elsa Goveia Memorial Prize of the Association of Caribbean Historians (A.C.H.) in April 1983.
40. Lobdell 1988; Hart 1988; Rich 1988; Trouillot 1989. As readers will doubtless have noted, this paper (unlike the general article referred to in Note 1) does not adequately discuss the relationship between changing technology and labor systems. A useful range of papers on this topic, derived from the panel "Changing Technology and the Labour Nexus" at the Americanists' Congress in Amsterdam in July 1988, has already been published in a special edition of the *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* (Spring 1990). Of these, particularly valuable for present purposes are the position paper by the convenors, Peter Boomgaard and Gert Oostindie, and the contribution by Richard B. Sheridan.

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MICHAEL J. CRATON  
Department of History  
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario  
Canada N2L 3G1

MICHAELINE A. CRICHLAW

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO FAMILY LAND TENURE IN  
THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN: THE CASE OF ST. LUCIA

The plantation economy forms the historical foundation and continuing legacy of modern Caribbean society. In the British colonies its formal restructuring in 1838 set in motion processes that involved the establishment of common institutions and practices that served to secure the livelihood for the majority of freed peoples. Additionally these various practices created mediatory links between state and people and among people themselves. Access to land has played a critical role in determining the nature of these links. Thus an analysis of land/people relations is a fundamental point of departure for understanding Caribbean society. Customary land tenure, more familiarly known as family land is a principal form of these relations and for most people their experienced reality. Hence its explication provides a special way of seeing the continuing formation of local societies in the Caribbean, while the generality of the relation provides a ground for understanding one of the underlying common structural features of Caribbean life.<sup>1</sup>

Family land represents a principal form of tenure. It may or may not exist alongside other tenure types and is neither non-legal nor an anachronism. Furthermore, its so-called inalienability is mediated by practical considerations of the welfare of multiple co-owners and/or the economic opportunities available. Since the problems attributed to family land are found to exist for land under other forms of tenure, there is reason to rethink the place of that tenure pattern within the dynamic of the agricultural sector and the socio-economy in general. My argument runs against the more popular approach adopted by analysts who, while cognizant of these ambiguities, attempt to treat family land tenure as institutionally separated,

with definite and fixed characteristics (Clarke 1957; Smith 1965; Besson 1979, 1987). And I should add, I here explicitly join those who call for restoring family land tenure to its rightful place alongside other recognized forms of tenure.

My exposition is in three sections. First, I consider family land as part of the small holder sector, reflecting problems associated with that sector. Thus the importance of land capability, small size, and debt have to be central to discussions of the "symbolic" versus the "economic" function of family land. Next I argue that because family land is an intrinsic component of the small holding sector, the distinction between legal and non-legal (e.g., family land) tenure needs to be thoroughly revised. For historically, as I shall show, small holders engaged in the purchase of their land at the same time that they were fulfilling "obligations" under family land ownership. And family land owners have various forms of documentation, some of which conform to accepted legal customs. Then, in the third part, using examples provided by my own research and that of others, I argue that the effects of external economic pressures have led to the sale of family land, causing a decline in agricultural production and the quality of life.

#### WHAT FAMILY LAND IS AND IS NOT

In the Caribbean, family land is defined as land owned by several heirs. St. Lucian owners acquired land from their grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, or other relatives such as aunts and uncles. Indeed the majority of respondents had inherited land in this way. Sixteen percent of them had inherited land from their grandmothers, from aunts, uncles, or even cousins. The number of owners who acquired land through the partition of family land was very small.<sup>2</sup>

There were some owners who still referred to land being family land although it was acquired within the past ten years. The operative distinction between this form of tenure and others, was that such land will be passed on to all (legitimate and "nonlegitimate") children. As Edith Clarke (1957) also found, land may be in a state of becoming family land at any time. Thus, the definition of family land remains imprecise. Family land is not communal land. It is accessible not to the community at large but only to heirs of a specific family. And its use is defined by family tradition. In theory, all heirs have access to family land and can produce any crop on it. In practice, family members usually invest one member with the responsibility of taking charge and seek his/her permission to cultivate or build on family land. In short, somebody, somewhere is in charge.

The main literature on family land in the Caribbean, following upon Clarke's now classic work on Jamaica, concur on the following features. First, land holdings are bequeathed through generations of heirs undivided. Second, all heirs irrespective of gender, residential location, and birth status are thus entitled to inherit. Third, such land is inalienable and finally, the continuing multiplication of the number of heirs or co-owners hamper productive activity on these holdings. Apart from these findings, research on the phenomenon on various Caribbean islands has highlighted the degrees to which these features differ in various important ways (Besson 1979:86-116; Carnegie 1987).

This literature shares a perspective in so far as it treats family land as a discrete "institution." Perhaps this is most clearly seen in the work of Clarke and M.G. Smith (1965). Clarke (1957:41) identifies two types of family land. Family land in the primary sense of the concept to which she refers is "land inherited from an ancestor who acquired it by gift from the slave-owner at Emancipation." In the secondary sense, family land constitutes land inherited from parents or grandparents who had originally acquired it by sale-purchase. Smith (1965:221) using his research on Carriacou as his point of departure, states that

Two highly distinct systems of land tenure are to be found side by side in many British Caribbean societies. One system is defined by statute and common law, and guides official policy in relation to land. The other system, which has recently been described for Jamaica by Miss Edith Clarke, is of a customary and traditional character which neither observes the forms nor directly invites the sanctions of law.

Smith (1965) would later use these "institutional distinctions" as evidence of the separation of folk practices from those of the elite as critical components in his thesis on plural society in the Caribbean. Similarly Besson (1979), who is primarily interested in the origins of family land tenure and sees it emanating out of conflicts between planters and peasants,<sup>3</sup> commits a similar error of treating family land as an institution. For example, she treats the plantation as the principal system against which the small holder responds, and she credits this response as the reason for the emergence of the family land tradition. Drawing upon the Beckford thesis on plantation economy and the peasant/plantation conflict,<sup>4</sup> Besson argues that the persistence of family land tenure is to be explained by the plantation's continued monopoly of the critical resource of land. The value of this approach is that it allows us to identify the socio-economic coordinates of property relations in the Caribbean. But here family land is still analyzed as if it were a monolithic institution – something that arose in response and in resistance to an equally monolithic institution, the plantation. This is the basis for the

argument of some analysts (Acosta & Casimir 1985) that family land tenure emerged in resistance to plantations and their mode of production.

The arguments of these institutional-structuralists operate within the paradigm of the plantation economy thesis (Bernstein & Pitt 1974; Sudama 1979). Therefore criticisms appropriate to the latter may also be applied here. In summary, these criticisms deal with, first, the inadequate treatment of the historical process and second, the treatment of "peasants" as an undifferentiated mass defined by a confrontational relationship to planters and plantation production. If, however, we shift the focus away from family land to a broader analysis of the contours of small holder existence, to facilitate closer scrutiny of the lives of those who established and sustain family land tenure, things become less discrete, more ambiguous, and more complex, and the assumptions underlying these institutional/structural paradigms less plausible. It is necessary to begin this analysis in the immediate post-emancipation era, since this is the period from which institutionalists find evidence for their arguments of resistance and antagonism to plantation production.

In the first place, resistance to the plantation was a fact of small holder existence. Ex-slaves used small plots of land to restructure their relations with the planter and plantation production. One of the effects of this restructuring was the complete or partial withholding of their labor. As plantations were labor intensive enterprises integrally linked to the circuit of capital accumulation in an emerging global economic system, this act threatened (or at least was perceived as threatening) planters and colonials alike. This was why planter response was so brutal and intransigent (Hall 1959; Marshall 1965; Louis 1982). But resistance was always accompanied by some form of accommodation. The formation of a Caribbean "peasantry" was at once an act of resistance and an act of Westernization (Mintz 1974:155). That is to say, newly freed people were also motivated by positive attitudes aimed at restructuring their lives. For example, socialized on the plantation they eagerly sought wages to supply them with material goods to which they had grown accustomed. To continue to afford this lifestyle, as well as to forge a new life associated with a certain amount of social and economic freedom, it was necessary and even desirable for them to pursue arrangements with the plantation. Additionally, the small holder shift from food production to sugar production in the face of higher sugar prices and the incapacity of the planters in St. Lucia to meet production needs by the 1870s plus the multiple contractual arrangements made with the planters, strongly hint that "peasant" existence involved other relations besides antagonism and struggle against the plantation.

This scenario demonstrates that, historically, both tendencies of resist-



ance and accommodation have operated simultaneously in the lives of the small holder. Perhaps they were even complementary. To focus only on one aspect of "peasant"/plantation relationship therefore obscures the multifaceted responses and initiatives of the newly freed people to a complex social system, which at once sought to deny their humanity and promote socio-economic values associated with a social structure dominated by planters if not plantations.

Rather than constantly assume that resistance was the major response of the ex-slaves to the plantation, we should pose more pertinent questions, answers to which would provide us with new insights into the lives of small holders. For example, "How did Caribbean ex-slaves seek to establish themselves as dignified citizens in a hostile socio-economic and political environment?" We may answer that they sought to do so – under the constraints of the period<sup>5</sup> – primarily through the control of land under various forms of tenure, including family land, free hold, land under common tenantry, or metayage.<sup>6</sup> Moreover these diverse yet linked forms of tenure stemmed from/led to hostile, accommodative, symbiotic relations between planter and peasant, all of which reflected the complexity of purpose of the newly freed peoples of the Caribbean. By virtue of such insights, we should be able to grasp more clearly the meaning(s) of family land to small holders and their communities in various parts of the Caribbean.

The approach proposed here forces us to see the plantation in its proper perspective and not as the source of original sin eliciting passive responses from those it attempts to dominate. Rather, the plantation is but one influential thread in the lives of Caribbean small holders and the degree of its influence varies in time and place according to specific historical patterns and opportunities – patterns and opportunities created as often as not by the initiatives undertaken by small holders themselves. If it is but one influence, however powerful, we may be forced to examine the socio-economic and political context of small holder existence to locate other influences – notably, state policies that have shaped land transactions in the Caribbean. In the absence of such research it is useful nonetheless to treat tenure patterns including family land as constantly in a state of flux and linked to the actions of people who may have been frequently, but not constantly, preoccupied with the actions of the state or *massa*.

Thus the institutional-structural approach characterized by the tendency to emphasise the so-called contrasting properties of family land and non-family land tenure flouts the historical process. In a very insightful article Carnegie (1987:83), noting this tendency, appealed for a review of this rigid institutional framework and cautioned that, "while it is useful to isolate the family land tradition for scrutiny at one end of a continuum of land tenure

forms, it must be put back into place alongside the seemingly contradictory forms with which it coexists."

### SMALL HOLDINGS: STRUGGLE AND SURVIVAL

Family land in Choiseul on the southwest, Caribbean coast of St. Lucia, and on St. Lucia more generally, is usually found among small holdings in an agricultural sector where land distribution and ownership is highly skewed; that is, acreage and the number of holdings are inversely related. As Table 1 shows, on St. Lucia, according to 1986 reports, holdings under five acres accounted for 76 percent of a total of 11,551 holdings nationally.<sup>7</sup> In Choiseul the equivalent figure was higher. Over 90 percent of the agricultural holdings was less than five acres. The second largest category consisted of those between five to ten acres (10 percent); in Choiseul slightly over four percent of the total number (Government of St. Lucia 1986: 22).<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF HOLDINGS AND ACREAGE BY SIZE IN CHOISEUL 1986

Size acres	Holdings		Acreage	
	no.	%	no.	%
Landless	31	3.12	N.A.	N.A.
<5	895	90.04	1197.4	61.69
5-9.9	44	4.43	297.9	15.35
10-24.9	17	1.71	233.5	12.03
25-49.9	7	0.70	212.5	10.95
Total	994	100	1941.3	100.02*

\*Due to rounding, figures appear uneven.

Source: Adapted from Government of St. Lucia, *Final Report on the 1986 Agricultural Census of St. Lucia*, Tables 2 and 2.1, pp. 18-19.

For the entire island, family land accounted for 45 percent of all parcels and occupied 24 to 30 percent of the total acreage of all agricultural holdings.<sup>9</sup> Of all the districts in St. Lucia, Choiseul had the largest bloc of family land (Government of St. Lucia, 1980). For example, 58 percent of all holdings there was thus categorized.<sup>10</sup> As shown in Table 2, family land owners in Choiseul, were the predominant group; 76 percent of land owners held family land, while 25 percent held land under other forms of tenure.<sup>11</sup> More women owned and/or had access to family land than to land under other

forms of tenure. This was so for men as well, but women were less likely to have additional parcels of land. For example 88 percent of women were family land owners while 12 percent held land under different tenure. This contrasts somewhat with men, 63 percent of whom were family land owners but 38 percent of whom had access to land held under other forms of tenure.<sup>12</sup>

TABLE 2. LAND TENURE BY SEX IN CHOISEUL

Sex of Respondent	Family Land	Non-Family Land	Total
Male	15(62.5)	9(37.5)	24(49.0)
Female	22(88.0)	3(12.0)	25(51.0)
Total	37(75.5)	12(24.5)	49(100)

Source: Land Registration and Titling Project (LRTP) Baseline Survey, St. Lucia 1987.

The lack of alternative forms of employment in the village and elsewhere on the island or the inability of owners to capitalize on employment opportunities meant that the most of the interviewees (67 percent) did not have the resources to purchase additional parcels of land.<sup>13</sup> But the possession of family land saved them from a state of landlessness.<sup>14</sup> This observation holds also for the district. According to the 1986 agricultural census, 69 percent of all agricultural holdings comprised one parcel of land, 23 percent had two, and a little over 3 percent had three or more. Most people therefore had no other land but family land. Without the existence of family land, a large number of poor people, particularly women, would not have had access to land.<sup>15</sup>

As part of the small holder sector, family land is expected to exhibit similar constraints associated with small farming. These constraints, which have been extensively described elsewhere,<sup>16</sup> include small size of plot, infertile soils, and inadequate access to credit and advice. Small holders are generally poor, and relatively older (over forty-nine years old), have low levels of education, have inadequate housing, and in the specific case of St. Lucia, speak French Creole (patois) more easily than English, the official language. Our research on Choiseul revealed several of these composite features. These constraints have circumscribed cultivation practices. The question considered here is whether and to what extent family land owners differ from owners under other forms of tenure in first, the area under cultivation; second, the level and type of production; and finally, the type of farming investments that they make.

### PRODUCTION AND UNDER-PRODUCTION ON FAMILY LAND

Within the structural/institutional framework perhaps the most potent attack against family land is that its peculiar arrangement, i.e., multiple-heir ownership, leads to waste, underproduction, uneconomic decisions, and neglect. Indeed St. Lucia is often said to have an "antiquated" land tenure system.<sup>17</sup> Analysts invariably have a tendency to lift family land out of its socio-economic context, thereby obscuring the role of factors such as soil fertility, access to credit, availability of labor in restricting production and productivity. This is partly because they fail to make any serious comparison between family land and non-family land.

The study of the Choiseul area suggests a few areas which need to be re-examined. Comparing family land and non-family land, I will show that family land in the Choiseul area presents few insurmountable barriers to cultivation. Moreover, the problems associated with production are at once historical and structural and represent the generic difficulties associated with farming in Choiseul, St. Lucia, and throughout the Caribbean in general. In any case, the "inefficiency" of farm-land is the flip side of the belief that land *qua* commodity, and owned individually is the prerequisite of "efficient" farming – a very common view, but one not commonly made explicit, is that alienability usually leads to land concentration.

In Choiseul small farmers plant according to the help available, the amount of land they can manage, and the crops they select given the market conditions. Although farming is not calculable in a strict capitalist accounting sense, it is not an erratic operation. Precise calculations of how much land is under cultivation by the type and number of crops is rarely ever done. Information on land use, garnered from this sample, is useful here less for its statistical precision than for a general sense of land use patterns.

The findings show that although privately held land parcels are more arable than family land, smaller amounts of it are cultivated. For example, 18 percent of freehold land is cultivated compared with 39 percent of family land. To put it another way, 66 percent of arable land on private holdings is uncultivated compared with 35 percent of family land. However, because family land plots tend to be smaller, in an absolute sense, the cultivated area of individually-held plots is larger. Among the major reasons given by family land owners and others for unfarmed sections of both types of land are: lack of accessible labor or the financial inability to hire available labor, the poor conditions of the soil, and the deterring presence of tree crops on the land. Only family land owners cite soil infertility as being a deterrent to production.<sup>18</sup> Owners and cultivators cite labor shortages as the main problem. Household help is limited and mechanization being practically nonex-

istent, middle-aged cultivators find it difficult to spend long hours performing manual tasks.<sup>19</sup> The cultivation of temporary crops like peanuts, potatoes, yams, and cucumbers requires much time and energy.<sup>20</sup>

A word about soil fertility. In St. Lucia only alluvial soils are well suited for intensive production of crops. These soils are mostly level and well drained, with few if any limitations with respect to land use (Le Franc 1980:97). Choiseul has very little fertile land. Its soils consist mainly of imperfectly drained clay and sand, which is least well suited for the growing of bananas, the main export crop in St. Lucia. While concrete geographical data on Choiseul are not readily available, St. Lucian analysts agree that the district suffers from some of the worst cases of soil erosion on the island. Bare rocks, dry river beds, and hardy grasses have replaced a wide variety of field and tree crops (sugarcane, cocoa, limes, and coffee) that thrived in the earlier part of the century. Choiseul has only 0.1 percent of its acreage under banana cultivation while coconuts, the second national export crop, occupies only 0.3 percent of the total land acreage. The district's greatest contribution to agriculture is in the production of avocados and breadfruit (Government of St. Lucia 1986:22). Choiseul is also known for its peanut and sweet potato crops which, aside from remittances sent from relatives (co-owners) abroad, may be the most important sources of income for its villagers.<sup>21</sup>

Climatically the area experiences extreme drought for at least half of the year and farming is undertaken only during the rainy six months of the year. For the rest of the time much of the land lies idle and many household members actually engage in other occupations, like fishing, handicrafts, and pottery. The rearing of goats, sheep, cows, and poultry is carried on throughout the year.<sup>22</sup> Another environmental factor is the location of the land. In our sample, most of the parcels of land of both family and individual tenure are located on steep hillsides; very few are situated on level land. Although the terrain of the land presents few problems of access, the absence of labor, the presence of low soil fertility, and the common lack of sound agricultural knowledge creates difficulties. It is a combination of these factors that makes the owner/cultivator either of family or non-family land an unattractive candidate for credit from formal institutions.<sup>23</sup> Because of the temporary nature of small holders' crops, the types of crops they grow, and the extremely small scale of their agricultural operations, bank officials perceive them as a credit risk. Agricultural extension officers generally prefer to service larger operations, involved in the production of the traditional export crops, primarily bananas.<sup>24</sup> This practice deprives small holders of crucial technical advice and guidance and severs them from formal institutional support.

## INVESTMENT DECISIONS

Thus soil infertility, small acreages, and lack of credit-worthiness partially explain small holder indifference to increased agricultural production and investment. The situation appears to be double-edged. Small holders abhor debt and find loans repulsive. At the same time, they cannot attract credit because of what is perceived as ad hoc "hit or miss" farming practises. Small investments are paid from their savings. They may also sell produce including livestock or borrow from relatively "safe" sources like relatives – anything to avoid jeopardizing ownership and control of their land.

What are the investments that they make in relation to agriculture? Of five owners/cultivators who secured loans, two were private land owners, and three family land owners. Interestingly the former cultivated approximately six to seven acres of land, and obtained financing from formal institutions like the St. Lucia Development Bank. The others who were farming roughly one to two acres, borrowed money from the local Choiseul Credit Union and Barclays Bank. The loans are used for consumption purposes and include the building and repair of houses, the purchasing of a truck, and agricultural inputs. Direct agricultural expenditures are kept to a minimum. These include the purchase of fertilizers, insecticides, seeds, plants and agricultural implements (e.g., machetes and forks), and the hiring of labor for weeding and manual plowing. Hired labor is often temporary, on a "when needed" basis for daily or task-work. When not hustling in the nearby towns or simply hanging out, youth may perform specific tasks on farms.

These various factors affecting agriculture suggest that land use and investment patterns on agricultural plots may count for more than land tenure. More specifically, the particular practices of family land tenure bear a striking resemblance to those encountered on land under other forms of tenure. Furthermore, when one examines the relation of co-owners to a registration and titling program held in St. Lucia between 1985 to 1987, the practice of treating family land as an enclave is unsupported.

## DOCUMENTATION OF FAMILY LAND TENURE

Since formal wills are generally absent, one of the key distinctions cited in the literature between family land and other tenure is that family land is not within the legal system. One of the main problems associated with this is the uncertainty of boundaries, and the extra-legal nature of relationships among co-owners (Bruce 1983:31). These observations strengthen the structural/institutional approach. The more one can identify differences

between family land and other forms of tenure, the stronger the case for treating family land as a separate and discrete folk institution, maintained by people who exist in constant conflict with formal bureaucratic authorities. Although family land differs from other forms of tenure particularly in the way in which it is acquired in the district of Choiseul, there is little to suggest that owners consciously try to protect land from the law by resisting legal forms of documentation. Everyone knows more or less who owns what and where the boundaries are.

At least for the Windward Islands (which includes St. Lucia), historical evidence provides ample proof of the practice of ex-slaves functioning outside of the formal institutions, but functioning through them as well. As Marshall (1965:313) points out, the voracious appetite of the ex-slaves for land led to the formation of hamlets and towns in St. Lucia. Furthermore, he notes that ex-slaves did utilize the legal system to secure land titles. As he describes, there were some ruthless planters who, taking advantage of this demand for land, actually sold land with fraudulent titles. The reaction of the ex-slaves was two-fold. In the first place "some consulted their stipendiary magistrates beforehand ... others were prepared to pay a higher than the market prices for land which carried a title" (Marshall 1965:308-9).

Purchasing of land and acceptance (however reluctantly) of the rules of the system were some of the early customs of many who were actively engaged in establishing ways of making themselves and their families less dependent upon the plantation and constructing dignified lives. And today, their descendants continue to make concessions to the formal system even as they organize around and outside of it.

My findings show not only that family land owners and others are generally willing to comply with the requirements of the land titling and registration exercise undertaken in the Choiseul area in 1987, but also that family land is fairly well documented; even when partially or totally undocumented, it is recognized by members of the family and community to be "titled" and the property of a particular family.<sup>25</sup> In the land titling exercise no distinction is made between the documentation proffered by family land co-owners and by individual land-owners. But the high percentage of family land in Choiseul leads me to believe that family land owners presented kinds of documentation similar to that presented by owners of non-family land. Table 3 shows the kind of documentation presented to LRTP officials.

TABLE 3. DOCUMENTATION PRESENTED TO THE LRTP BY ALL LAND OWNERS

Types of Documentation	Number of Respondents	%
Title Deeds	23	57.5
Document of Transfers	2	5.0
Affidavit thru Inheritance	10	25.0
Long Possession Affidavit	4	10.0
Survey Plan	0	0.0
Other Declaration	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Source: Land Registration and Titling Project Baseline Survey, St. Lucia 1987.

Although Choiseul has a lower level of documentation than other districts (e.g., Micoud and Millette), it is higher than we expected considering the predominance of family land tenure. In fact the district as a whole received 48 percent Absolute (uncontested) titles and 52 percent Provisional titles (from officials of the Land Registration and Titling Project, LRTP) pending the presentation of other forms of legal proof of ownership. These figures may be understated because the process of registration had only recently been completed and all the required procedures for registration and review were still underway at the time of our study. Nevertheless, titles did in some cases assure co-owners and the community in general of their property claims long before the implementation of the LRTP; while for others the LRTP made no difference to their feelings of security. These perspectives can be distilled from the following concerns.

The eagerness with which owners responded to LRTP appeals was a case in point. Ninety-three percent of the respondents actually spent time showing LRTP officials their boundaries in spite of the fact that the land had not been surveyed and most of the owners had visited the LRTP offices to claim their land.<sup>26</sup> Second, although people took time to respond to the demands of the LRTP they expressed a certain amount of reservation about its use<sup>27</sup>; 52 percent felt that they were not any more secure about their rights to the land, nor any more or less certain that they would receive credit. Neither were they more or less disposed to sell the land. At the same time, 31 percent of the owners said that the LRTP had made them feel more secure.

Like other forms of land tenure family land tenure may or may not be fully documented. Clearly more research needs to be done to explore why this is so. However, using legal and non-legal documentation to distinguish between non-family land and family land is unilluminating and uninterest-



ing. Perhaps earlier conclusions were based on the confusion between the absence of documentation as a function of conscious resistance to the legal system and that which came about because of social and economic impediments posed by difficulties in understanding the requirements of the registration process. However, if as some analysts imply there exists less regard for the formal legal system in the post-war period, then careful study is needed to explain these tendencies in order to trace the possible erosion of this attitude. Account also needs to be taken of the nature of the land titling process in order to determine whether co-owners experienced real difficulties in their attempt to legalize their claims or whether there existed a conscious disregard for and resistance towards the legal system. We need to know how and under what circumstances any one attitude (or both) held sway.

#### OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES AND LURES

Attitudes towards the sale of family land is another area where ambiguities abound. We could argue that while access to family land is regarded by family-members as security, loyalty to its inalienability is circumscribed by the material conditions of the multiple co-owners. For example, Leslie McKay highlights the correlation between tourism development and the fragmentation of family land in the Jamaican village of Negril. Owners took advantage of land development and sold their land. McKay (1987:148) argues that "peasants" became economically minded in the face of external forces, and concludes that "[i]f family land evolved as a means of existing independently of a dominant colonial system, that of plantation agriculture, then the use of family land can be seen as a means of competing with or maintaining an interest in a new export-orientated foreign dominated industry."<sup>28</sup>

Carnegie's (1987:88-89) research on Jamaica also identifies the commodification of family land: he notes,

Given the provision that family land be passed on in undivided units and the stricture against its alienation by heirs, it has surprised me, in my work in Sturge Town so far, to find there a lively market in real estate; small plots are bought and sold much as they might be in any large city. A few of these involve the buying or selling of somewhat larger tracts of farmland ... but the vast majority involve minuscule plots within the village itself. Many of the purchases coincide with periods when outside earnings have been more readily available. Young men from the village who went to work in Cuba in the 1920s and earlier ... all came back with extra amounts of cash which allowed them to buy houses and small plots of land of their own on which to raise their new families. Some of these sale transactions were between close kin or affines: brother and brother, father's brother and nephew, mother's brother and sister's daughter's husband, for instance, but most seem not to have been between close relatives.

The sale of family land may not be anomalous, but the likelihood of its commodification has to be contextualized within the particular historical dynamics of the household, the community, and the island's economy. To this end, understanding how decisions are made is vital. Unfortunately, neither Carnegie nor McKay provides data on the decision making process involved in these sales. Thus there are no insights on the nature of family ties, and the likely impact of economic pressures on family solidarity. Nor do we know to what kind of family land they refer – whether it was old family land such as that inherited from grandfathers, or new family land that will be so established by the next generation. These issues deserve to be carefully explored and researched. For it is possible, too, that attitudes towards family land will vary depending on its relative age.

The point here is that a strong sense of inalienability of family land may crumble unceremoniously in the face of economic pressures or lures – i.e., the attraction of converting land to cash resulting in the dissolution of that form of tenure. In our study, two situations confirmed this. In the first case, where the question was posed about willingness to sell family land, some family members (21 percent) said that they would sell the land for a good price, and that its sale would depend on the family opinion (26 percent). At the same time, 40 percent adamantly refused to entertain any question of sale. However, very few of our respondents felt that sale of their rights to other family members was a more feasible probability than to non-family members.<sup>29</sup> This ambiguity in attitude to family land was also discovered by Greenfield (1960:173-74) in his study on Barbados. He notes “two conflicting sets of attitudes held by villagers, 1. which supports the sanctity of family land and 2. which supported its alienation.”<sup>30</sup>

This ambiguity can lead to the actual alienability of family land. One family member can undertake to separate his/her share and thus contravene its “sanctity.” The following case demonstrates how, why, and with what consequences this might occur. Ma E. of Morne Dubout returning from England where she had resided for over twenty-eight years, discovered that her family land was in a state of gross neglect. Although she had access to other land inherited from her father, she surveyed the family land and separated her share from that of the other co-owners. According to Ma E. she wanted to cultivate the land and safeguard it against encroachments by other heirs to the property such as the “way-ward” son of her brother who resided there.<sup>31</sup> However, such independence has its price. Ma E.'s family is incensed over her actions, since they feel that family trust is violated. The irony of the situation is that these family members were (during our field work) negotiating with an outsider from the capital city of Castries to sell a piece of family land located elsewhere. The only obstacle to the sale was that

the price offered was considered too low. Perhaps family members objected to Ma E.'s style rather than the issue of partitioning of the land.

Further underscoring this obvious disjuncture between appearances and reality, 70 percent of our respondents feel that (all things being equal) family land should remain as is for several reasons: the fear of disputes, the possible fragmentation of property which would have the effect of minimizing property values, and the desire to allow all members of the family to "enjoy their inheritance." This ambivalence towards the practice of inalienability suggests that further research should be conducted on the changes which have occurred in the lives of the household and community. For example, are households becoming less dependent on agriculture? Is income sufficiently removed from agricultural activity to erode the symbolism attached to family land and the preoccupation with extracting economic benefit even from family land? Are the integral family links becoming transformed? One area that will need to be investigated to this end is changes in family land use.

#### ACCESSIBILITY AND FAMILY RELATIONS

As various accounts have pointed out, unpartitioned family land can provide security and support to family members who most need it.<sup>32</sup> The reason for this is the principle of common usage rights – the entitlement of all heirs of the former owner. At the same time there are unspoken family rituals to which such usage conforms. In practice, for example, common accessibility does not mean a free-for-all. If one family member is cultivating a section of the property, and another seeks access, it is customary that permission be sought.

The principle of open access to common property by several heirs and their offspring has led analysts into believing *a priori* that competing claims to usage are inevitable with disastrous consequences for cultivation practices, such as the planting of temporary crops unsuited for the soils, or an end to agricultural production altogether, and the spiralling of family disputes. This latter perspective informs the work of Clarke (1957:44), who argues that one of the most common causes of litigation in Jamaica are disputes over contradictory claims involving family land. The assumption is that since all heirs have rights, they will invariably invoke those rights resulting in a squeeze on resources. However, Blustain's (1981:48) research on Jamaica contests this perspective. Instead he found that family land involved much more than common rights to a property, "there are relatively few disputes. Almost all farmers working family-land stress the importance

of 'loving families' (sic) in which brothers, sisters and cousins cooperate in the farming or allocation of land left to them by their forbearers. Family-land thus involves ideas not only about land, but also about the cohesiveness and unity of the family."<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, the inheritance of rights does not automatically entail the invocation of those rights. In the first place, the existence of family land does not automatically translate into common habitation practices. The constant search for a better standard of living for one's self and family has meant a propensity to migrate from rural to urban areas, from urban to foreign countries or from poor rural to better-off rural districts (Marshall 1986; Roberts 1979). Out-migration therefore delays, and sometimes eliminates, the kind of pressure alluded to by Clarke (1957). Furthermore, a matter not considered by Clarke is that a number of family land owners have rights in multiple estates.

Only a handful of respondents claimed that all the co-owners of their land resided in St. Lucia, and most said that only a few members cultivated the family land.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, roughly 73 percent were engaged in other occupations, mainly in urban areas, and several lived outside the district in which family land was located. Many were resident in the United States or in England. Perhaps as Keith Otterbein (1966:33) claims, heirs who migrate to other locations automatically face difficulties upon their return in asserting their rights. The assertion of rights from a distance is logistically difficult but also can incur social disapproval.<sup>35</sup> However, the extent to which this occurs depends on the particular nature of the relationship among heirs and the intricacies of the rules of access to family land.

While each co-owner has the right to access any (tree) crop cultivated by the original owner of family land, a different rule obtains for crops cultivated by present co-owners or their heirs. For the latter, permission has to be sought. There are exceptions though. Relations between co-owners determine the process and outcome. The specific relations among family members as co-owners of family land affect their use of each other's land. In cases where strong ties exist among co-owners, for example, such permission either to reap or even to co-cultivate may be totally unnecessary. The reverse holds where strong ties do not exist.

At the same time, it is equally important to recognize that the sharing of family land does not always predispose family relations to assume a particular character – e.g., lead to "lovingness" as discussed by Blustein (1981). Our study shows that family land relations are dependent on relations already forged between and among co-owners. Co-owners who reside off family land are treated in a way that reflects the character of that specific relationship. All things being equal, they are treated in the same way as

good friends or family regardless of their mutual rights to property. There were no elaborate exchanges of produce or gifts because of shared resources. The demonstration of goodwill among relatives is a function of many factors in addition to that of shared family land ownership.

This however does not mean that relationships between co-owners could never be the result of sharing family land. Close inter-personal relations may develop in cases where particular co-owners may agree to cultivate or maintain a portion of land together. These arrangements could lead to a level of sharing and "lovingness." Interviews conducted on two larger agricultural establishments reveal that where this occurred, "lovingness" and a "sharing" developed.<sup>36</sup> More detailed research is perhaps needed at the case study level, to ascertain what factors cause these kinds of relationships among co-owners of family land, and under what circumstances they are likely to occur and flourish.

### CONCLUSION

My own research findings, though preliminary, raise a number of pertinent questions that challenge the rigid institutional-structural approach to family land tenure. Briefly, we can distinguish between family land and communal land of the sort associated with non-capitalist social systems. In Europe and elsewhere, the disintegration of communal land systems is fundamentally associated with the emergence of capitalist relations of production. Communal land belonged to communities and/or families.<sup>37</sup> Indeed fragmentation of communal property in land was key to the effective operation of land taxation that ushered in class and status distinctions among land owners and operators. As several analysts have noted, the individualization of property was at once a cause and effect of the spread of capitalist relations of production since it was a condition for the commoditization of land and the "freeing" of labor for work on estates. In colonial territories of the sort found in Africa, communal land tenure existed before the arrival of European colonists and the subsequent institutionalization of estate and plantation agriculture. Settler farming thus disrupted native culture making it difficult in some places for communal land tenure owners to subsist. The commoditization of land and production for a world market in Africa thus shaped new relations of production premised on the destruction of communal land tenure where these existed.

Unlike communal land in Western Europe or in other colonial societies, family land in the Anglophone Caribbean is not a feature of a non-capitalist society or even a precapitalist one. Indeed, as many analysts have eloquently

pointed out, Caribbean societies were already linked to the world market and had within them a highly developed factory-like division of labor, namely plantations producing sugar. In short, Caribbean societies were neither feudal nor were they characterized by communal forms of land tenure, but were critical sites from which profits were secured for capital accumulation in Western Europe.<sup>38</sup>

I have also argued that the ownership and practices of family land are ambiguous and inexact. Attitudes to farming, relations among co-owners, and relations to legally acceptable practices, cultivation techniques, and investment decisions all express these ambivalences. In this perspective, family land tenure is affected by similar processes that circumscribe and/or transform the practices of the small holder. In this sense family land tenure, like other forms of tenure, is relational and varies through time.

These exploratory findings scratch the surface of the workings of family land tenure in other Caribbean islands. They draw attention to the need for more rigorous research in several areas utilizing methodologies based on case studies, life histories, and in depth interviews in order to further isolate and link family land tenure with the rest of the agricultural sector in such a way that the lives of small holders and those families holding family land are captured in all their rich complexity.

## NOTES

1. This paper is the result of research carried out in Choiseul, St. Lucia, on the impact of the Land Registration and Titling Project (LRTP) in St. Lucia. The research was organized under the auspices of the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin Madison. I would like to thank Dan Bradburd, Charles Carnegie, and Terence Hopkins for their very useful comments in the revision of this paper. As always, I bear sole responsibility for its shortcomings.

2. This clearly reinforces the view of Clarke (1957:63) about the inalienability of family land, that "once there has been joint inheritance, by all family, the principle of inalienability is also invoked." This also questions notions about the fragmentation of family land contained in some of the literature on the subject.

3. Clarke (1953) argues that there was a conflict between the peasant form of land tenure that was African and English law primarily in the area of inheritance – i.e. ownership by the entire family and its insulation (non alienation) from the market.

4. Beckford (1972) sees the peasant/plantation conflict as the principal dynamism in the agricultural sector of Caribbean countries.

5. As Edith Clarke (1957:35) so aptly summarizes this desire for land, "their hopes concerning land ownership indicated that they had sound ideas concerning the real meaning of freedom."

6. Metayage was a practice in which the planters and peasants shared the produce of the land under verbal agreements during the decline of sugar cane production. For more on how this system worked, see Marshall (1965:28-55).

7. Holdings are the total number of parcels of land owned by any one person. For example a person who has three pieces of land has a single holding. My sample consists of approximately forty-eight holdings comprising one to three parcels. The sample is drawn from representative map sheets compiled by the Land Registration and Titling Project. Sampled parcels led to "information about other parcels and other parcels and other people connected through either labor or other relationships both to the original parcel and to the person with whom we started talking" (Land Tenure Center 1988b:33). Thus we interviewed parcel owners, up to five when they were many and present, actual cultivators who were either co-owners, in the case of family land, cultivating owners of non-family land or cultivating non-owners as in the case of renters or sharecropping. The sample is very representative of the Choiseul area, and reflects (more or less) the findings of other researchers involved in the project. For a detailed analysis of the methodological framework used see the above cited report and Land Tenure Center (1988a).

8. Choiseul is not entirely composed of small holdings. Unfortunately, the number and size of these holdings over fifty acres in size are unrecorded in the agricultural census of 1986, erroneously suggesting that they do not exist in this district. I cannot document the actual number of such holdings. One of these alone, the River Doree Holdings occupies roughly 1,140 acres while another, the Windward Islands Tropical Plants, Ltd., cultivates approximately fifty acres of land, with plans for expansion. In any case, since the structure of land ownership is disproportionately distributed for every district in St. Lucia there is every reason to believe that Choiseul follows a similar pattern. The picture for 1986 shows that 76 percent of agricultural holdings in St. Lucia were less than five acres and occupied approximately 12,350 acres of land. In contrast, there were 47 holdings (.5 percent of all agricultural holdings) of over one hundred acres that controlled roughly 22,545 acres of land. Between these two extremes were the middle farmers cultivating ten to ninety-nine acres of land, and controlling 1,784 holdings that constituted an acreage of 13,320.

9. The Final Report 1986 records the total (i.e. for all of St. Lucia) agricultural acreage on holdings as constituting 56,795. Of these 13,880 are family owned. Privately owned land accounted for 34,214 (Government of St. Lucia, 1986). But there have a number of conflicting accounts. For example, Meliczek (1975:20) claims that the number was below 20 percent while others have cited various figures as high as 64 percent and as low as 3 percent. Bruce (1983:25-31) summarizes these disparities well.

10. Individually owned parcels account for 280, or 22 percent. Rented/private, rented/government, squatting government, squatting/private constitute 12 percent, 0.6 percent, 0.3 percent, and 3.5 percent respectively. These parcels represent roughly 1940 acres. Holdings that include family land, individually owned, rented/private, rented/government, squatting/government, squatting private occupied 1012.5 (52 percent), 715.1 (37 percent), 140.9 (7 percent), 9.0 (.5 percent), 2.0 (.1 percent), and 44.8 (2 percent) acres respectively. The sample include predominantly small holdings. For example, of the total number of parcels, 48, or roughly 96 percent (higher than the entire district) were four acres or less in size. Only two parcels (4 percent) were sixteen acres.

11. Fifty percent of the sample from which the final sample is drawn is family land. Twenty percent is individually held land.

12. Indeed, one of the areas overlooked in the literature on family land tenure is the question of ownership and access to land by poor people and women. Our findings indicate that multiple tenure is desirable among family land owners. But this holds only for those who can afford to buy land. However, because most family land owners are poor, family land represents the only access to land that they would normally have in their lifetime.

13. Few job opportunities exist in the village. Teaching and work with government via the village council, fishing, handicraft, and shopkeeping are the alternatives to agriculture.
14. A few owners (29 percent) have two parcels and 4 percent own more than three parcels.
15. See Government of St. Lucia (1986:27). Table 7 shows that of 992 holdings, 686 consist of holdings of one parcel, 231 of holdings of two parcels, and 75 of three and more parcels of land.
16. See for example Beckford (1975) and Edwards (1961). Although the latter deals specifically with Jamaica, the analysis can be extended to other Caribbean territories including St. Lucia.
17. Analysts such as Clarke (1957:66), Comitas (1962:152), and Edwards (1961:112) support the view that family land is detrimental to production claiming that it is underutilized. Writing on St. Lucia, Mathurin (1967:1-5) and Meliczek (1975) identify family land as "an unfavorable system of land tenure" which is "stifling agricultural development." Finkel (1971) also describes it as a grave deterrent to agricultural development as a result of the many claims of access by co-owners that restrict the cultivator's interest in pursuing serious cultivation practices. This position also finds resonance in the work of others. Besson (1979:105), for example, faults the system's inefficiency in the use of "unrestricted cognatic descent" and contends that family land serves a symbolic as opposed to economic function, "for it enables the retention by numerous co-heirs of inalienable rights to freehold land."
18. Data were unavailable for 24 percent of the sample.
19. The average household has only two persons who can be relied upon to assist in the farming of land.
20. Approximately 721 acres are under permanent and medium crops in Choiseul. This no doubt constitutes the acreage of the large holdings unrecorded either in numbers or acreages. Five hundred and twenty one are under temporary crops. This would be the domain of the small holders who constitute over 95 percent of our sample. At the same time, Choiseul has the least land (148 acres) under forest and woodland (Government of St. Lucia 1986:22).
21. Furthermore, it is easier for census officers (or any one) to count tree crops than it is to estimate the amount of peanuts planted at any one time. Perhaps too, the peanut crop had been harvested during the census. These are all subsumed under the headings of short term and/or temporary crops.
22. Many engage in these various occupations simultaneously.
23. This was confirmed by officers of the St. Lucia Development Bank (one of the major agricultural financial institutions) during an interview.
24. In countering this position, extension officers believe that these small holders do not follow their advice. Whatever the reason, small holders seldom benefit from the critical services of extension officers.
25. The conclusions are tentative for a number of reasons. Our study began only two months after the LTRP had been undertaken. Information on parcels and holdings of land had not all been transferred to the Land Registry and the ninety-day period during which the maps outlining people's claims in the district were displayed for public viewing and comment was still in effect at the time of our survey.
26. Respondents took from half to nine days clearing their land in order to display their boundary poles to LRTP officials.
27. LRTP officials believed that people did not know their boundary perimeters, needed official approval to feel secure, and would agree wholeheartedly with their rulings.



28. McKay's work would have been more insightful had she captured the decision-making process involved in the sale of family land given the large number of heirs associated with it. Nevertheless, both McKay (1987) and Carnegie (1987) highlight the importance of approaching the family land question without any *a priori* assumptions about its stagnation, neglect, and sacrosanctity or the separateness of its existence.

29. Forty-two percent asserted that it was not possible to sell family land to a non-family member compared with 38 percent who were unwilling to sell to a family member. But those who felt that the sale of land to family or non-family members depended upon the opinion of other family members actually appeared partial to the sale of family land.

30. Greenfield (1960) refers to this Janus-faced attitude as "Modern" vs "Old" or presumably traditional. It is clearly a position that reflects at once the economic value of land and the need to conserve this resource, and probably reflects changes in the economic and social position of household members and/or the community at large.

31. In order to protect the privacy of informants the name and place used are fictitious. At the time of the interview, Ma E. and her husband were the main cultivators of the property but occasionally would employ the services of young men from the area to assist in the weeding and manual ploughing of the land. Since partitioning the property, they have planted fruit trees, vegetables, and tree crops including bananas and plantains.

32. See for example Barraclough's (1991:5) discussion of the positive role played by customary land tenure against famine and further food disaster in Africa. He states that "[i]t should be noted that traditional community organizations and communal land tenure systems, why they have survived, often protect rural residents and the environment from some of the worst impacts of rapid cash crop expansion."

33. Blustain's research (1981:48-56) was carried out over a two-and-a-half-year period and covered the Second Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP). This area was located in the northeast and northwest Clarendon and northeast Manchester as well as "corners of Trelawny, St. Ann, and St. Catherine" covering roughly 4,000 small (three acres) farms.

34. Twenty-seven percent of co-owners farmed family land at the time of our field work and 29 percent did so within the last five years. It must be remembered that family land may still be cultivated by a tenant who may be charged a nominal rent or operate as a sharecropper, or even another family member who may not be an heir.

35. Although our research findings dispute Otterbein's claim, it is important to note the limitations of the interview method that we adopted while living in the area for approximately five months. One must allow for a disjuncture for how people feel particularly, hypothetically, and how they act in a concrete situation.

36. Of the twenty workers (wage and task oriented) employed on the River Doree Holdings and the Windward Islands Tropical Plants Ltd. who were interviewed, 40 percent were closely linked to family members with whom they cooperated actively.

37. There were certain periods when blood-linked kin may have composed entire communities.

38. The literature on this subject is vast and controversial. See for example, Williams (1944); Wallerstein (1979); Mintz (1984; 1987); and Blaut (1989).

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MICHAELINE A. CRICLOW  
Department of Sociology  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton NY 13617, U.S.A.

ANDREW ZIMBALIST

BASEBALL AND SOCIETY IN THE CARIBBEAN

*The Tropic of Baseball: Baseball in the Dominican Republic.* Rob Ruck. Westport CT: Meckler, 1991. x + 205 pp. (Cloth n.p.)

*Trading with the Enemy: A Yankee Travels Through Castro's Cuba.* Tom Miller. New York: Atheneum, 1992. x + 338 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.00)

Read Bart Giamatti's *Take Time for Paradise* (1989) or any of the other grand old game sentimentalists and you'll discover that baseball somehow perfectly reflects the temperament of U.S. culture. This match, in turn, accounts for baseball's enduring and penetrating popularity in the United States. Read Ruck and Miller and you'll learn that baseball is more popular and culturally dominant in the Dominican Republic and Cuba than it is to the north. The suppressed syllogism affirms that U.S. and Caribbean cultures hold intimate similarities. If that is true, this Caribbeanist has been out to lunch; then again, no one ever accused economists of having acute cultural sensibilities.

Decomposing the syllogism, the flaw comes with the sentimentalists, not with Ruck and Miller. *The Tropic of Baseball* and *Trading with the Enemy* are two entertaining and interesting accounts of Caribbean culture.

Ruck does a magnificent job in portraying the integration of baseball in Dominican life. Part of Ruck's method is to alternate his narrative between baseball and Dominican history, making the two appear to evolve interactively. The dominant role of the United States in Dominican history since 1870, when the U.S. Senate came within a few votes of annexing the Dominican Republic as a state, is an important theme in Ruck's treatment. It was, after all, occupying U.S. marines at the beginning of the twentieth century who introduced the game to the Dominicans. One of Ruck's main oral his-

tory informants, Pedro Julio Santana, a 76-year-old literary executive, explains that the typical Dominican has a love/hate relationship with the United States. On the one hand, Dominicans resent the imperialist role the United States has played in its internal affairs, but, on the other, they are grateful for the gift of baseball. It is common, he says, for a Dominican to be a fan of both Augusto César Sandino and the New York Yankees. "They have not given us anything else that, in my opinion, is of any value but baseball. And here, baseball is the king."

Baseball is not only woven into Dominican history, it is also woven into Dominican Republic communities. Ruck writes about two of the Dominican Republic's teams (p. 12):

*Licey* and *Escogido* were not distant institutions, isolated by the megabucks of contemporary sport or distanced by television. They were close at hand, the teams' directors identifiable, and the players men with whom many rubbed shoulders in the course of a day in the tropics. More than mere ball clubs, these social institutions linked families, athletes, and fans in a lifelong sporting fraternity. And the rivalry, rather than crystallizing splits within the republic along the lines of class or color, actually allowed the Dominicans to transcend these differences and join together in a larger sense of community. That has prevailed across the generations and even through the dark years of the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo into the 1980s.

The first Dominican national championship was played in 1921. At the time the capital, Santo Domingo, had a population of a bit above 30,000 and the championship series drew over 20,000 in attendance. That would be like a World Series in Yankee Stadium drawing six million people to the ballpark over four games. The 1921 championship brought each team a total of \$2,000. During the 1920s the game in the Dominican Republic became increasingly professionalized, as players, though not formally paid a salary until 1929, were paid covertly through phantom jobs and perquisites.

By the middle of 1930, Dominican strongman General Rafael Trujillo had risen to power. Though he was said to prefer horses and women to baseball, members of his family were devout baseball fans and became very involved in the game. On his son's behalf, Trujillo arranged for two teams to merge to form one dominant team, named *Ciudad Trujillo*, which he further stocked by buying stars from the U.S. Negro Leagues. Two Hall-of-Famers, Josh Gibson and James 'Cool Papa' Bell, played for *Ciudad*. The rising cost of fielding a team and the imbalanced competition resulting from Trujillo's game plan led to the ultimate demise of the Dominican professional league in the late 1930s, not to reappear until 1951.

One force that has driven baseball's popularity through the decades has been the country's weak economy. Boys have little else to aspire to, other than one day making it to the Dominican winter league or the Major

Leagues, to take them out of their squalid, opportunity-less communities. In San Pedro de Macorís where more than one-third of the country's one hundred-plus players who have been in the Major Leagues come from, it is said that a male baby's first present is always a bat and a ball.

In recent years the Dominican winter league has run into hard times. The economic crisis has diminished the fan base as fewer people can afford an outing to the ballpark, transportation to the park is difficult, and going to night games (when blackouts are often experienced) is sometimes dangerous. Part of the waning popularity is due to the greater reluctance for Dominican major leaguers to play in the winter league. The small salaries mean nothing to them and they are more concerned about keeping free of injuries. Former participants like Tony Fernández, Juan Samuel, Pascual Pérez, Tony Peña, and Alfredo Griffin are being replaced by minor leaguers.

Ruck's account also includes vignettes of several big leaguers and their relationship to their old communities and comparisons to baseball elsewhere in the Caribbean. At one point he quotes Cuban-born Chico Fernández, who played with the Baltimore Orioles, on his thoughts on Fidel Castro (p. 69): "They've fucked everything up there. It once was a beautiful place. You could get anything you wanted – women – gambling – anything." Perhaps Chico Fernández would find Cuba in late 1993 more to his liking. He should read Tom Miller's book to learn about what most regard as a horrifying deterioration in Cuban life since 1989.

Miller spent several months travelling around Cuba in 1990 and January 1991. He then returned for a short visit in February 1992. Miller made contacts with an assortment of people from Cuba's literati and tells extended tales about what it is like to be a writer or an artist in Cuba today. He also runs into a variety of random Cubans and Cubans who tend to seek out foreigners, and tells their tale as well. He effectively sprinkles in, albeit incongruously at times, bits and pieces of Cuban politics and history (e.g., Guantánamo Bay, José Martí, the U.S. embargo, the Cuban life of Ernest Hemingway, the Bay of Pigs).

Miller's great virtue is that he is able to capture the complexity of Cuban life and of the Cuban people's feelings toward Fidel Castro and their government. No matter how materially difficult things get in Cuba, Castro seems to retain a significant degree of popularity and legitimacy. There is both good and bad in Cuba. To his credit, Miller eschews ideological characterizations and accurately portrays the contradictions of Cuban society. If he has a deficiency in this regard, it is that he doesn't reach very broadly across Cuba's social spectrum. Except fleetingly, Miller tells us little about the life of the urban or rural worker.

Miller's mosaic of Cuban culture also includes a lengthy discussion of

baseball. Cuba's baseball season begins with an eighteen-team (one team per province, plus two in Havana City and two other provinces), forty-five-game National Series. Teams play three-game series against each other; the first two games are in the provincial capital and the last is played in a remote town to assure that all have access to live games. There are two divisions, and the winners meet in a playoff. After the playoff, the eighteen teams are consolidated as the best players are selected to play in an eight-team league. Each of the eight teams play sixty-three games in the Selective Series. The best players from here are chosen to represent Cuba in international competitions. Cuban players and umpires are not professional and putatively retain full-time jobs outside baseball from which they derive all of their remuneration. Miller quotes several players as saying they play for the fun, glory, and pride of representing their province and potentially their country.

Miller relates the history of baseball in Cuba and its close relationship to the Major Leagues through the middle of the 1960 season. Apparently the first professional baseball league in Cuba was organized in 1878 (two years after its inception in the United States) by Emilio Sabourín. When Sabourín donated the profits from the league to the independence movement, the Spanish banned baseball and threw Sabourín in prison. It seems that, like much else in Cuba, baseball is a symbol of resistance.

In 1909 the American League Champions, the Detroit Tigers with their star Ty Cobb, went to Cuba for a series. The Havana Reds shellacked them. Cobb apparently was in a slump, or a *mojito*-induced stupor. Eleven years later Babe Ruth, the King of Swat, fresh from his first year with the Yankees, was paid \$40,000 for touring Cuba for several weeks with the New York Giants. Thirty years after that another king, Fidel Castro, was pitching side-arm curveballs to soon-to-be Brooklyn Dodger, Don Hoak. Miller recalls in some interesting detail what Hoak had to say about Castro's prowess on the mound. Apparently his career as a ballplayer would have been considerably shorter than his career as President. But then, this could be said about anybody's career as a ballplayer.

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ANDREW ZIMBALIST  
Department of Economics  
Smith College  
Northampton MA 01063, U.S.A.

STEPHAN PALMIÉ

ADJUSTING LENSES: DISCOURSE, POWER, AND IDENTITY, AT  
HOME AND ABROAD

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*Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn.* Karen McCarthy Brown. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. x + 405 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.00, Paper US\$ 13.00)

*Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race.* Philip Kasinitz. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. xv + 280 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95, Paper US\$ 13.95)

Ever since the first truly free nation of the Americas emerged from the agony of the Haitian Revolution, the western part of Hispaniola has been subject to torturous exertions of the European and American imagination. If, by reappropriating their own persons, the Haitians withheld a prime object of capitalist desire, their defiance was answered, in part, by the symbolic objectification of Haiti – this time not by merchants and empire-builders, but by *philosophes*, literati, and artists “organic” to various European and American regimes, anciens as well as nouveaux. Part of this was pragmatically motivated. The mere existence of Haiti spelled an immediate threat to the stability of New World polities predicated on the exploitation of unfree black labor. If slave revolts were endemic to the region, the events after 1791 seemed to exemplify the pandemic potential of black insurrection in its most virulent forms. Moreover, though direct connections to the events in St. Domingue could rarely be substantiated, the outbreaks of violence in Grenada, Demerara, Louisiana, St. Vincent, and Jamaica in the mid-1790s, and the subsequent proliferation (of real as well as imagined)



plots in Cuba, Virginia, and Trinidad lent additional weight to fears about the contagious nature of libertarian ideas (cf. Genovese 1979 and Geggus 1989 for rather different assessments of the reality behind such perceptions). Hence the frantic attempts to establish a cordon sanitaire between the source of revolutionary disease and those slave populations still uncontaminated – a course of action which may well represent one of the first instances of genuinely international information control. Yet slaveholders' recensions of the Haitian Revolution as symptomatic of a morbid process in need of containment did not exhaust its semantic potential.

Haiti, it seems, had "occurred" at an ideologically particularly inopportune juncture. That the burning of Cap François virtually coincided with the declaration of the *droit des hommes* in St. Domingue, the decree of abolition, and the degeneration of French Jacobinism into sheer terror was surely no accident. Yet neither were these events unconnected with the ideological dynamic set in motion by those formerly "freeborn Englishmen" who, after throwing off the yoke of "colonial slavery," had themselves passed on the torch of (national) liberation. If, to paraphrase Winthrop Jordan (1968:376), the birth of modern republicanism had been marked by as polite an event as a "tea party," did the fall of the Bastille, and the horrors of St. Domingue represent the progressions of a logical series? Not only for Americans, but for much of the rest of the world, the consummation of this seeming carnival of horrors in the defeat of Leclerc's troops, and the founding of the Haitian state threatened to relativize not only a political, but an ideological order. Far from establishing their newly organized polities on par with other nations, Dessalines' assumption of Bonapartesque emperorship, and Pétion's modeling of the republic's constitution after that of the United States, in European and American eyes, seemed to add insult to injury. Yet if attempts at military re-conquest had failed (or were ruled out by economic interest and global political entanglements), the symbolic transformation of Haiti into a world of monstrous inversions wholly outside the moral universe of "civilized man" remained a viable – and, one presumes, psychologically gratifying – option. Hence the rapid growth of a truly international body of representational practices geared towards constituting the "Black Republic" as a historical anomaly or aberration (cf. Schüller 1992).

Though presenting no more than a minute fragment of the pictorial record, C. Herman Middelani's booklet *Schwarze Freiheit im Dialog* (a multi-authored catalogue of an exhibit first staged at the University of Bielefeld) affords a glimpse of the mechanics of this process of re-establishing symbolic control. What is particularly striking is that while in terms of literary production a Haitian voice at least seems discernible (e.g., in the writings of de Vastey, Colombel or, indeed, Henri Christophe's correspondence with

Clarkson), Europe enjoyed a complete monopoly over the means of visually representing Haiti's revolutionary history. As Marcel Chatillon points out in the volume's first essay (p. 15), even when, in 1820, the Haitian government commissioned a series of engravings intended to provide a first visual charter of the nation's heroic origins, the task was executed not in Port-au-Prince, but by French artists in Paris (plates number 11 and 12).

The "fixing" of Haiti in European visual discourse, it seems, proceeded on several levels, each partly dominated by particular moral and political readings and iconological conventions: from an early assimilation of black insurgency to the iconography of Jacobinism (and its consequent negative permutations after Thermidor 9), through various transformations of classical imagery, romantic conceptions of the noble savage and natural man, to the very bottom line of a disgusting catalogue of sadist projections. Middelanis and the three other contributors to the volume, however, merely suggest the contours of such processes. Their aim is less to monitor the emergence and vilification of a Haitian "Other" in "Western" discourse than to juxtapose this stream of imagery with contemporary Haitian attempts to reclaim the island's history and recent past. More than the text itself, Edouard Duval Carrié's paintings and especially the photographs of murals dating from the crucial period of 1986-91 document a desperate struggle not only to invest a disturbed past and "spoiled" national identity with moral significance, but to celebrate the Haitian people's will to forge its own destiny against overpowering odds.

Middelanis' slim collection contains little that will strike Haitianists as particularly new or worthy of a specialist's attention. Also, chances are that its publication in German, a language utterly foreign to most scholars in this field, and its limited distribution may conspire to make it go unnoticed. Still there is an important sense in which this modest booklet, though in a partly unintended manner, gives testimony to the tragic ironies of Haitian history. *Schwarze Freiheit im Dialog* represents the catalogue of an exhibit commemorating what most of the world chose to regard as a non-event – the bicentennial of the Haitian Revolution. Especially if viewed as framed between the key dates 1989 and 1992 – both of which saw veritable explosions of public bi- and quincennial re-presentations – the efforts of Middelanis and his collaborators appear as a commendable political gesture. Drawing attention to the continuity of Haitian political struggle, their book more than obliquely suggests an analogy between the Revolution and Aristide's *lavalas* electoral victory in early 1991. Yet a mere four days after the exhibition opened on November 26, 1991, the political reality behind this hopeful vision had been violently shattered by the military coup. By the time the exhibit closed, Aristide – "the fruit of our efforts," as one mural portrays

him – was in exile, the dialogue with a history of liberation had ended in a new round of terror, and the world turned to a new celebratory agenda: one centered on the career of a Genoese mariner who stepped ashore on the eastern coast of Hispaniola sometime in December 1492.

*Schwarze Freiheit im Dialog* may not add much to our knowledge about the transformations this island underwent in the intervening five centuries (both “on the ground” and in symbolic terms). Yet what it does speak to is a present that needs to be understood and addressed, not as yet another repetition of a savage farce played out on the periphery of the stage of world history, but as a historically determined moment in a tragical, often violent, and always asymmetrical dialogue – a juncture, at which our failure to respond in a morally responsible manner will once more implicate us in perpetuating a global ideological and political-economic order of which the Haitian tragedy is merely a particularly glaring result.

The language in which the “West” has so far largely cast its contribution to this “dialogue on black liberty” emerged in several stages. If a visual and rhetorical topology marking the Haitian Revolution as an inversion of the “natural order” (as projected by a ready-made enlightened discourse on inequality and civilizational progress) consolidated within decades of the event, the later nineteenth century saw the rise of even more viciously totalizing discursive practices centering on the island and its inhabitants. It is tempting to argue (and probably true) that once diplomatic recognition had become inevitable (and economic penetration desirable), an imaginary reconquest of the social and cultural “interior” of the Haitian state – spearheaded by Victorian travel writers and their American epigoni – became the order of the day. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of the likes of Spencer St. John and William Seabrook, the body of beliefs and practices known to the “civilized world” as “Voodoo” came to play a key role in this venture. As a *pars pro toto* for what was felt to be wrong about a “Black Republic,” *vodou* turned into a focus for the malignant blend of political castigation and rhetorical “othering” characteristic of the relationship between Haiti and “the West.”

As a result, representations of “Voodoo” have proliferated to a degree where their referent might well be considered part of our cultures rather than that of the Haitians. Just like the Africa of *Tarzan of the Apes*, the Haiti of secret rites and mystical debaucheries is not a geographical locality, but a discursive *topos*; an imaginary exotic dependency, if you will, colonized and duly exploited by Western popular culture for its symbolic resources. There is an ugly twist to this view. It may, for instance, be more than a coincidence that Hollywood discovered the “Zombie”-genre at precisely the time when American interventionists were doing their best to reduce Haitians to a

condition not all that dissimilar from what practitioners of *vodou* consider the *zonbi*'s plight: loss of personhood due to the establishment of control over one's physical existence by an alien will power for malicious, exploitative reasons. There *was* a reality corresponding to these mass-produced fantasies, yet it was precisely this reality that they served to mystify. Ironically, Seabrook himself more than hinted at this reality when reporting Haitian rumors that *zonbis* formed part of the workforce of HASCO – only, of course, to misconstrue such penetrating moral analyses as the ludicrous product of a primitive and confused imagination.

Little has changed since then, except for the chilling fact that the Duvaliers' U.S.-supported regime managed to reduce Haiti to the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, bequeathing the country a horrific legacy of violence and human tragedy. Given this state of affairs, it is hard to believe that fantasies of "dark saturnalia celebrated by 'blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened' negroes" – as Alfred Métraux (1972:15) summed up the "Voodoo"-stereotypy current in the aftermath of the U.S.-occupation and the so-called anti-superstition campaigns – continue to enact their thrall upon the Western psyche. Yet, as the commercial success of Wade Davis' awesome discoveries (appropriately turned into a bona fide horror movie) indicates, they do.

This may be testimony to the psychological function such representations serve in Western cultures. But there is more to it than the appeal of a licit venue for projection and symbolic regression. For the fact that the lurid imagery of Hollywood-"Voodoo" continues to insinuate itself into the American political discourse on the allocation of blame for Haiti's heart-wrenching misery (cf. Dayan 1988 for telling examples from the U.S. press) bespeaks an entirely different set of mechanisms of defense and denial, mechanisms that operate not so much to displace individual aggressive impulses onto a handy cultural and racial "Other" as to mystify the scandalous realities of exploitation and political domination (see Farmer 1992 for a trenchant analysis of this moment in relation to the discourse on the origins and spread of the HIV-pandemic).

Karen McCarthy Brown's prize-winning *Mama Lola: A Voodoo Priestess in Brooklyn* does not address these issues directly. Yet her book goes a good way towards correcting some of the worst misconceptions surrounding *vodou* and its practitioners. Partly, this is due to the author's decision not to counter such malignant fictions with yet another – this time benevolent and supposedly factual – objectification of "the real" *vodou*. Instead, she portrays this religion as embodied in and refracted through the lives of a small group of practitioners, among which one would have to count the author herself. In 1981 McCarthy Brown underwent initiation into the religion she

had originally set out to study, and she wants the reader to take this into account when judging what she has to say. Yet *Mama Lola* is not an anthropological confession or field work memoir. Neither is it a monograph about *vodou*. And it is certainly more than a life history of its principal character, Marie Thérèse Alourdes Macena Margaux Kowalski, alias Mama Lola, a female Haitian migrant *cum* religious specialist.

Instead, and above all, McCarthy Brown's book is a highly personal attempt to explore the possibilities of understanding between human subjects positioned at the interface of widely divergent, but partly overlapping cultural and social worlds. If there is one rhetorical figure that pervades the book, it is the optimistic metaphor of building bridges across the historically conditioned divides that separate not only *Mama Lola*'s two main protagonists – a white American anthropologist and her Haitian migrant “informant” – but also the reader and the object(s) of his or her intellectual curiosity. In this, McCarthy Brown quite self-consciously cuts out for herself a task that seems to go beyond the traditional representational concerns of ethnography. If read against the backdrop of the flood of programmatic statements postulating the demise of ethnographic realism with its authoritarian conception of self and fetishistic concern with “otherness,” her agenda may sound somewhat homey. But it is candid and rather well taken. It was her experience of increasing intellectual as well as emotional entanglement between subject and object of inquiry, McCarthy Brown argues, that brought her to “an acknowledgment that ethnographic research, whatever else it is, is a form of human relationship” (p. 12). Eschewing the dichotomizing implications of the traditional imagery of “cultural translation,” she sees possibilities for truth “in between,” and opts for an anthropology “closer to a social art form, open both to aesthetic and moral judgment” (p. 12). The result is certainly not a conventional anthropological monograph, but the author fortunately stops way short of providing yet another addition to the blurry genre of prophecies announcing the coming rapture of new ethnographic sensibilities.

*Mama Lola*'s narrative encompasses the intertwining of several lives in a plot structured by the interaction of humans and gods over the course of several generations. It includes deliberately fictionalized vignettes of past events and human destinies accessible to the anthropologist – and, in a sense, her informant, too – only in the form of stories to be told and retold. This time it is the anthropologist who does the telling, lending, as it were, her (literate) voice to what she sees as the task of imparting moral sense rather than contriving more than a semblance of factuality. These short narratives delineate a movement downward in time that unfolds in the form of a spiritual family history. Its generational links are marked by the acceptance of

the obligation to "serve the spirits" by each new member entering the developmental cycle of a kind of human/divine unit of cooperation. Given this narrative project, and the author's acknowledgment of her deepening implication in Mama Lola's *vodou fanmi*, an eventual switch to the third person that renders the observer/author/novice an object of her own descriptive activity – faddish though it seems – is quite logical.

Such "ethnographic inventions" alternate with thematically organized chapters closer in tune with traditional anthropological genre conventions. Here McCarthy Brown presumably proceeds from the Durkheimian notion that deities – as collective representations, or individualized versions thereof – serve to attract and condense meanings into categorical frames. She thus structures her material according to the semantic and experiential fields defined by the characteristics ascribed to six individual *lwa* (deities). In this, her choice of a mere fraction of what has often erroneously been termed the "pantheon" of Haitian *vodou* as "indexing rubrics" for her account seems informed by a double concern. The *lwa* she focuses on – Azaka, Ogou, Kouzinn, Ezili, Danbala, and Gede – are popular in both Haiti and the Haitian diaspora in New York. But more importantly, they are the ones that partake of the particular lives McCarthy Brown focuses on, and are, therefore, not only actors in the story, but affected by it.

The "spirits," McCarthy Brown argues, distill vital, and often contradictory, aspects of Haitian historical experience into complex models of and for thought and behavior. Yet though generalizable as derivative of and pertinent to such experiences, they succumb, in the course of human/divine interaction, to intensely personal processes of re-signification. The beings with whom Alourdes interacts, McCarthy Brown tells us, "explore 'for her' all the potentialities, constructive and destructive, in a given life situation" and "allow 'her' to reflect on problems and to make her own choices" (p. 112). Yet the very choice and definition of such spirits/models is subject both to this *manbo's* (priestess's) historical position and personal idiosyncrasies. As in other Afro-Caribbean religions, there is an (at least implicit) understanding that the gods themselves are malleable. By binding their *serviteurs* into relationships of exchange ranging from kinship obligations to contractual arrangements, the *lwa* themselves do not escape this logic of mutuality. The kinds of spirits *Mama Lola* and her little Brooklyn *fanmi* serve, as well as the transformations these spirits experienced within its fold, bespeak the inseparability of history and biography as the two dialectical poles between which cultural reproduction is achieved.

Much of this will ring true to students of other Afro-Caribbean religions and undoubtedly to anthropologists of religion in general. Men and women make their own gods. But they make them not under conditions of their own

choosing. Human selves and divine others are products not only of culture, but of history. They become aware of their relationships and interact under circumstances over which they – objectively – have limited control. They fumble and improvise; they may, indeed, despair of each other and their relationship, forsake each other, or – in stubborn defiance of developmental sociology – mutually adapt to changing structures of opportunity and need.

In that respect, both strengths and weaknesses of McCarthy Brown's book derive from her decision to depict these processes not only *as carried forward* – and thus exemplifiable – by instances of individual practice, but *as virtually coterminous with it*. The result is a perspective offering rich insights into the psychology of human/divine interaction, and the vicissitudes of maintaining a sense of tradition and dignity in a changing, brutalized, and brutalizing world. When McCarthy Brown talks about the moral economy of female sexual exploitation, gift-giving and dependency, the politics of suffering, strategies for weaving social safety nets, need-induced cultural creativity and other issues very much at the heart of the experience of Haitian females at home and abroad, the picture she paints is as vivid as it is empathetic. Despite a few gratuitous lapses into the terrain of travel writing (e.g., in Chapter 12), there is no (or very little) exoticizing romantization of "traditional culture" or "the downtrodden (female) poor." But there also is little amounting to an analytical perspective that would allow the reader to understand the historical determinants of (rather than merely sympathize with) the plight of *vodouissants*, female Caribbean migrants, Haitian Americans and, perhaps also, anthropologists searching for new definitions of the relationship between selfhood and otherness.

This, in all fairness, would have gone quite a way beyond what McCarthy Brown tried to achieve in *Mama Lola*. Neither is it the reviewer's intention to carp about what an older conception of the anthropologist's job would have construed into a lack of analytical rigor and, yes, detachment. *Mama Lola* is not a book addressed to an audience of specialists in the field of Afro-American religious anthropology. In fact, one of its genuine merits is that it will hopefully serve a much broader educational purpose than that of adding a few intellectual snippets to *vodou*-scholarship. The problem, rather, lies in the fact that McCarthy Brown foregrounds the subjectivity of her story's protagonists to a degree that makes everything else – including, unfortunately, the sense of a relation existing between the biographical moment and the wider historical frames within which it takes shape – retreat into a hazy backstage area.

This has little to do with questions about the "representativeness" or "typicalness" of what McCarthy Brown writes about. It rather touches on the problem of exactly how individual biography and (collective) history

intersect and become culturally mediated. If even the gods succumb to the (cumulative) historical choices their human partners make under dire circumstances, why not explore more explicitly the kinds of conjunctures existing between culture as an historically determined repository for modes of thought and action, and the kinds of choices and constraints individuals face – situated as they are, not only at particular biographical moments, but in the historically structured social world within which such “moments” take shape? And once we begin to probe the possibilities of making statements from a vantage point “between” cultures, would we not want to try to historicize our own subjectivity in a similar manner? Is there no “background” to our own involvement – whether as anthropologists, readers, or simply experiencing subjects – to the, alas, only too vicarious participation in the worlds of “our” others? (Do we not return to our comparatively well paid jobs after a sally into the field – even if it has taken on the feel of a “second home”?)

Finally, a word about the business of constructing lives. Even if we discount the unpleasant fact that much of what we think of as our “biography” is not entirely a “story” of our own making, the “course” particular lives seem to evidence in retrospect is simply not a given. Just as the classical life-cycle of the analyst’s imagination, the red thread in our own lives emerges from interpretative acts imposed upon a chaotic welter of experiences and observations. Everyone who has tried to elicit a life history from a person who has no readymade public version of his life at hand (or offers a too obviously well-crafted one) knows that the job of making sense out of lives is not an easy one. To recognize this does not imply a call for authoritarian fact-finding. It is to recognize that the past is too scarce a resource to be exploited to any other than its maximum utility – even if it is used in the interest of exchanging honesty for credibility.

If this be true for ourselves, our “ethnographic alters,” even though they may become significant others within our own “biography,” are no exception. They go through similar, though perhaps differently structured, tribulations in re-creating what they – and we, from yet another remove – choose to call their lives. These various strands of interpretation and reinterpretation are difficult to disentangle, and McCarthy Brown’s candor in pointing this out is laudable. Yet all of them are in some sense or other culturally (and therefore historically) informed. This, however, poses another problem for those of us not content with Boswell’s role: ought we not try to uncover the cultural templates – ideas about selfhood, identity, community, and history – by means of which individuals retrospectively weave events and experiences into continuous and meaningful life stories? And in case it is we who do the weaving, should we not try to achieve the same?

McCarthy Brown might well agree to much of the foregoing. It is, after



all, consequential to her own argument. That her book doesn't quite seem to deliver all the cargo one would hope for may be part of exactly these rather fundamental problems. It is, however, and despite such qualms, an important contribution to redressing an historically accumulated balance. One would wish the book the kind of general readership its author seems to have intended.

A very different perspective on people like Alourdes Kowalski is presented in Philip Kasinitz's *Caribbean New York*. Though his and McCarthy Brown's book, at first glance, appear virtually opposed in theoretical orientation, methodology, scope, and style, they make for (some) interesting comparisons. Kasinitz's rather facile (but not uncommon – see, for example, Sutton 1987) subsumption of Haitian Brooklynites under the rubric of “Non-Hispanic Caribbeans” may, of course, raise eyebrows. As regards residential distribution and certain political rallying grounds, “the boundaries between English-speaking West Indians and Haitians” may be thought of as “blurring” (p. 14) – especially if compared to the rather distinct patterns of settlement and political behavior exhibited by New York City's Hispanic-Caribbean population. Yet to leave such generalizations unqualified as to the extent of amity, mutual identification, and commonality of political interests is problematic, to say the least (cf. Glick-Schiller *et al.* 1987; Charles 1992). Haitians, after all, not only look back on a rather distinct “history of othering,” but face uncommonly high communication barriers – vis-à-vis not only their English-speaking host society, but other Caribbean migrant groups as well. For while migrants from the former British colonies are usually familiar with English as a “high-status” variant within their native idiomatic continuum, and native Spanish speakers can link up with an ethnically heterogeneous (and politically divisive) but linguistically homogeneous speech community in New York, the predicament of migrants whose first – and sometimes only – language is *kreyol* is quite unique. Most striking, perhaps: no other Caribbean migrant group has been afflicted with the kind of stigma produced by three years on the Center for Disease Control's list of high-risk groups. If, as Alex Stepick (1992:67) reports from Miami, “Haitians believe that all major ethnic groups in south Florida discriminate against them,” we might do well to ponder whether Haitian Brooklynites feel they fare any better.

Yet while the Haitian diaspora is surely unique in several respects, it cannot be denied that the overall structural changes Kasinitz describes, as well as some of the maneuvers of the largely Anglophone interest groups and public figures central to his account, have had more than a peripheral bearing on the lives of such comparatively “invisible,” and politically disengaged small fry as Mama Lola. For in certain important ways, and regardless of

their provenience, they are all in the same boat; as black immigrants in Brooklyn, their social identities – and as Kasinitz would have it “life chances” – are deeply affected by the politics of defining and contesting the meaning of race and ethnicity as determinants of one’s position in relation to the changing structure of social and economic opportunity in metropolitan New York. Objectified as a cultural standard by which social inequality is organized by their host society, skin color remains their predicament. But just as “race” has no “naturally fixed” ontic status (nor even a grounding in universals of human perception – cf. Mintz 1971, Wade 1993), so does the social division of labor within which their biographies, collective identities, and symbolic universes take shape, remain subject to historical change. So what picture do we get once we adjust our focus to the larger parameters within which the cultural worlds and historical experiences of our ethnographic interlocutors unfold?

Kasinitz’s is a rather straightforwardly sociological study with some significant overtures to social history. *Caribbean New York* has a clearcut heuristic agenda, focuses largely on aggregate units of analysis and highly visible public activists, and presents its arguments and data in a manner “unencumbered” by fanciful theorizing, rhetorical flourishes, or distracting questions about the experiential complexities beneath the surface of political behavior the author intends to monitor. Yet Kasinitz does make a point of highlighting the historical volatility, multiplex determination, and contested character of public constructions of identity and community, thus going well beyond the sterile debate about the “subjective” or “objective” determination of ethnicity. Finally, he is conscious of and candid about the shortcomings of his research design and the consequent potential for a “male activist-centered” bias in his representation of the political practices and goals of Caribbean Brooklynites (pp. 12ff.).

The question Kasinitz poses – how does an immigrant group negotiate an “American” political identity? – is by no means a new one, though the nature of his subject obviously prompts considerable rephrasing. Different from ethnogenetic processes among other historical immigrant populations, the making of a politically salient “Caribbean ethnicity” was – and, to a certain extent, still is – compounded by an additional variable: a phenotypical appearance rendering most individuals from the region highly susceptible to assimilation into the American conceptual category “black persons.” As a consequence, Caribbean immigrants “entered a society far more prosperous than the ones they left, but in doing so they also joined the ranks of America’s most consistently oppressed minority group” (p. 32). On the other hand, such “racially determined” incorporation as Caribbean migrants experienced in the United States did not necessarily mean a con-

gruence between ascribed and self-perceived identity. Neither did it automatically assure their integration into locally pre-existing African-American communities (cf. Palmié 1989 for a different, but not unrelated case). Instead, as Virginia Dominguez (1975:32) has put it, these immigrants have traditionally suffered a unique combination of two almost contradictory forms of discrimination: first, an invisibility (in Ellisonian terms) because the blackness of their skin color, which relegates them to classification as Afro-Americans, leaves their special needs as immigrants relatively unattended; and, second, a double visibility – as blacks to whites, and as foreigners to native blacks.

Despite Ira de Reid's pathbreaking but hardly noticed monograph *The Negro Immigrant* (1939), the kinds of social adaptations and identities produced by this process remained, up until very recently, virtually unexplored. Given the orientation of American sociology of immigration and (what used to be called) "race relations research," towards the building of models explaining (and hopefully minimizing) conflict between presumably homogeneous "minorities" and an equally undifferentiated (white) majority, this comes as no surprise. Although Glazer and Moynihan (1963) successfully damaged the classic "natural history" approach to American immigrant incorporation and cultural adjustment (whatever one may think about the shortcomings of their report, *this much* goes to their credit), the relation between "race" and "ethnicity" as variables in such processes not only remained poorly understood on an analytical level, but was compounded *in social reality* by changing patterns of racial exclusion attendant to legal desegregation, the events following the 1965 immigration reforms, and the restructuring of New York's political landscape and urban economy.

Perhaps the most obvious of these factors was the sheer demographic growth of America's Caribbean migrant population after 1965. Although a noticeable Caribbean presence in New York dates back to at least the turn of the century, between 1966 and 1970 the annual average of legal U.S.-bound emigration from the Anglophone Caribbean (11,500) quintupled over the levels attained during the previous half decade. Going by the census figures of 1980, the "foreign-born black" population (a decidedly problematic, though not entirely invalid category) had attained a size of well over 800,000 (thus constituting more than 3 percent of the total black population of the United States) with well over half of these first-generation migrants concentrated in the (urban) Northeast (pp. 25-28). Today, New York City's legal as well as illegal immigrant population from the region (not counting individuals of second- or third-generation Caribbean descent who continue to claim such ancestry as a significant aspect of their public identity) may well have surpassed one million, a number that clearly ren-

ders them a potential constituency – *provided* their collective behavior underwrites the assumption that they, in fact, represent a recognizable, intentionally bounded, and internally coherent social unit.

Yet this, as Kasinitz would argue, is precisely where the problem lies – and not just because lingering “island identities” complicate the forging of a Caribbean-American political consensus. As any politician knows, numbers alone are a dangerous indicator of political behavior. And, in fact, viewed *à la longue*, Caribbean participation in New York politics exhibits an ostensibly paradoxical patterning. Regardless of their recent population growth in absolute numbers, Caribbean migrants already represented almost as large a share of New York City’s black population by 1930 as they do today. This might be taken as an indication of why this group has traditionally brought forth a disproportionately large number of political activists and public figures. Yet matters are not quite that simple. For the conventional “critical mass” theories of ethnic mobilization on which such judgment might be based ultimately fails to explain the changing nature of their political behavior. “Twenty-five years ago,” Kasinitz (p. 160) tells us, “dozens of West Indians occupied prominent political and economic positions in New York’s black community, yet few would have claimed to be ‘Caribbean leaders.’ Today dozens of persons have put themselves forward as such.” Despite the long-standing existence of island-focused community organizations, until well into the 1970s, black migrants from the Caribbean tended to cast their (American) political lot with the native African-American majority. Now, however, we face a situation where this “racial” consensus has splintered in various, only partly predictable ways: on the one hand, and contrary to traditional theories of immigrant assimilation, we find an increase of not only identification with, but active participation in, the political, economic, and social life of the immigrants’ home countries (a problem that, unfortunately remains peripheral to Kasinitz’ book); on the other hand, there are strong indications that the formation of a pan-Caribbean identity – something that (despite CARICOM and other attempts) has never been achieved at home – is well underway in New York and other areas of the North American “diaspora.” Again, one wonders whether this applies to Haitians or other Francophone Caribbeans as well (it certainly does not apply to migrants from the Hispanic Caribbean), but the puzzling question remains: “Why does an immigrant group play down its separate identity and merge itself within a larger category at one point in its American experience, only to choose to emphasize its cultural distinctiveness at another, much later point?” (p. 7).

This, however, is really a question not only of “why” but “how.” Although the title of William J. Wilson’s *The Declining Significance of Race* (1981) has

been far too happily turned into a slogan in some quarters, there is no question that the social meaning of "race" as a cultural marker of identity and otherness (with all the concrete ramifications of these concepts in social life) has undergone profound changes. Both in the perception of the migrants themselves, and in the eyes of their multiracial host society, legal desegregation and affirmative action attenuated the power of "race" as *the* paramount principle for organizing economic inequality and social exclusion. Such assessments may have been superficial (to wit: the increasing visibility of a "black underclass"), but they did change perceptions of potential economic venues and rewards. Accordingly, part of the story about the public emergence of "black ethnicities" from a previously artificially homogenized "status group" may have revolved around the scramble for access to a piece of the pie. Kasinitz certainly has a point when he argues (p. 10) that the American "state's willingness at a certain historical juncture to respond to 'ethnic' demands" created the institutional and cognitive framework within which black migrants could imagine themselves as a community *ethnically* distinct from "Black America" (cf. Anderson 1983). Polemically stated, one might say that once the civil rights movement had eased the transition of Caribbean achievers (a traditional and highly ambiguous reputation of this group) into (black) American middle class positions, their disengagement from "racial" markers of identity was but a function of the general trend towards the mobilization of newly "discovered" ethnicities for political purposes observable all over America since the mid-1970s.

Yet matters are somewhat more complicated than this, and to construe this process into a revenge of the "monkey chaser" would be not only to grossly misrepresent the issue at hand, but to slight the analytical significance of this process of (partial) ethnic disengagement. Regardless of what the envisioned spoils (or previous resentments) may be, people do not simply shed their identities like some piece of clothing inappropriate to the social context at hand. Though fundamentally predicated on a historical division of labor and its attendant structure of inequality, identity – as John Comaroff (1987) has put it – is a relation inscribed in cultural terms. And these have to make sense – not only to those who would engineer, *divide et impera*-fashion, the "ethnicization" of Black America, or those cultural entrepreneurs directly involved in designing a symbolic repertoire of emblematic difference, but also for those who come to embody varying, partly overlapping, and sometimes contradictory, markers of "ethnicity." As Kasinitz's detailed discussion of the creation of an infrastructure of ethnically "Caribbean" institutions, services, and economic niches in Brooklyn suggests, consciousness of kind neither arises merely on the basis of demographic concentration and access to "ethnically channelled" economic op-

portunities, nor can it be conjured up by symbolic practice alone. Ethnic rhetoric (what Kasinitz calls "ethnicity from the top down") must match a structural situation where changes in "ethnic" modes of organizing social action become experientially and motivationally salient ("ethnicity from the bottom up").

In this sense, Kasinitz's choice to focus on the Brooklyn Labor Day Caribbean Carnival as a diagnostic public performance is cogent. Though hardly amenable to formal politicization, this unruly and unpredictable event provides a stage where the terms on which the "Caribbeanization" of a significant part of New York City's black population is to proceed are both symptomatically displayed (the yearly answer to the "who are we" question) and re-negotiated. This is not only a matter of drawing external communal boundaries. Kasinitz's tantalizingly brief discussion of the connotations of the struggle over the dominance of Trinidadian/Jamaican symbolic repertoires in actual performance (pp. 148-53), for example, raises important questions about the internally contested nature not only of this event, but of its object of reference: Caribbean-American identity. If New York City has become a "Caribbean-Crossroads" (Sutton 1987:19), presenting the structural requisites for the construction of an extra-territorial "pan-Caribbean" identity, we surely would not expect monolithic results, but a complex formation whose various components are selectively activated in social practice, and might, at times, engender painful contradictions.

Yet such interpretative ventures into the domain of "soft" social science also highlight the weaknesses of Kasinitz's study. For one thing, the somewhat rigid division of his book into sections on "ethnicity from the bottom up" and "ethnicity from the top down" (as if there really was such a "division of symbolic labor"!) tends to obscure the ways in which ethnic ideologies, once created within a particular social-historical context, often take on a seemingly "autonomous" character in affecting the lives of their makers. To state merely that "the ethnicity entrepreneurs [i.e. a fast-growing group of self-styled "leaders" championing ethnic agendas] of New York's West Indian community have developed an ideology that depicts as historically inevitable an outcome that they are working hard to bring about" (p. 200) does not capture the experiential intricacies of this process. For example, Kasinitz may be right in arguing that during the mid-1980s the ethnicization of New York's Caribbean population allowed the white power elite to break up the black vote (and even the Caribbean electorate) into a variety of collectivities rallying around the demand for recognition rather than around concrete political issues. But is it enough to suggest that the organizers of "Caribbeans for Koch" *and* their constituency were essentially in it to increase their visibility – and leave it at that? Ideology and cultural

practice may appear congruent at times, but they are not the same. Rather than focusing on the political manipulations of ethnicity at the "top," it might have been more fruitful to explore the kinds of "crab antics" going on at the bottom of the barrel. Surely, "the genie of black immigrant politics is out of the bottle now" (p. 250), but what – if, indeed, anything – does this mean in terms of the "life chances," outlook, and daily struggles of "invisibles" like Alourdes Kowalski? If their "leaders" may perhaps discount the relevance of their personal moral judgment to "larger" concerns, is there anything (other than the epistemological slant of political sociology) that commands our following suit?

The vertical orientation of Kasinitz's argument (bottom/top) likewise mars what otherwise is a useful study. For it fails to capture the salience of horizontal linkages articulating not only the political activity of New York's Caribbean migrants, but their individual experience, with the wider "transnational" context of what Orlando Patterson (1987) has termed the "West Atlantic System." Just as their presence in New York is neither accidental nor explicable by variables endogenous to their native social environments, for many of them New York City is not the only, and not even the most important, social arena in which they see themselves operating. In a very real sense, they straddle – and (despite the most sacred tenets of modernization theory) continue to do so – two different worlds. Yet there is very little in Kasinitz's book (contrary to McCarthy Brown's) that might give us a clue as to how the acquisition of an American identity articulates with the continuation of "island" roles and statuses. Though Kasinitz acknowledges (Chapter 1, *passim*) that a history of migration from this region is integral to (rather than presenting a departure from) the "traditional" patterning of what we, today, know as "Caribbean cultures" (cf. Richardson 1983; Carnegie 1987), this fact is far from adequately taken into account in what follows. If remittances nowadays stabilize seemingly "traditional" modes of cultural adaptations in the migrants' home countries, this speaks less to the "compelling" nature of institutions like, say, *vodou* (Richman 1992a) or family land (Besson 1987) than to particular *transnational* forms of articulation that underwrite the forging of networks of social relations spanning seemingly improbable geographic distances. Nor is this only a matter of pre-migration cultural alliances harnessed to the exigencies and options of a "West Atlantic" political economy. Kasinitz briefly touches upon this point (for example, in his discussion of the changing goal-structure of New York's Jamaican Progressive League, pp. 116ff.), but just as McCarthy Brown fails to theoretically situate her subject's experiential tribulations over the maintenance of ties of kinship and ritual obligation across thousands of miles, so does he slight the political import of precisely such connections.

Would we then want to talk of ethnicity reinforced "from aside"? Absurd as such terminology would be, there may be a point in rethinking our units of analysis: indeed, in talking about a "tenth department" (the Haitian diaspora community), *père* Aristide may have pointed the way (Richman 1992b). As much as the United States is central to the Caribbean region, Brooklyn has become a (albeit economically powerful, and politically relevant) periphery of Jamaica, Haiti, or the Dominican Republic. Not that the recognition of such "lateral dynamics" in the reproduction of global structures of inequality would have mere academic relevance. Different from those brief but memorable days when Revolutions were still Revolutions celebratable at home without the necessity of anguish over their impact abroad, today coups are coups, wherever they occur, and whatever pragmatic rationale might seem to justify deferring moral judgment and shunning responsibility. Instead, we need to understand these processes – not on our terms, but in terms of historically mediated relations. For this purpose, neither myopic, nor hypermetropic vistas will do.

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STEPHAN PALMIÉ  
Amerika-Institut der Universität München  
Schellingstr. 3  
D-8000 München 40, Germany

MIGAN<sup>1</sup>

Our friend Charlemagne (a.k.a. Émilien), who lives down the road and considers himself a breadfruit connoisseur, says that there's only one other tree in southern Martinique whose fruit compares with ours. From our back porch, during the tree's several flowerings each year, we can reach out and pick low-growing fruit by hand, or with a knife-and-pole contraption cut down a milk-flecked orb from higher up in the broad green leaves. This particular tree may even be descended from the oldest breadfruit in the Caribbean, for Martinique was already blessed with trees, transported from "L'Île-de-France" (Mauritius), by the time Captain Bligh made his 1791-93 voyage from Polynesia, "bringing breadfruit from what was seen to be a Tree of Life in the islands of Paradise ... the very symbol of a free and unencumbered life ... to feed slaves, the living dead of the Caribbean" (Dening 1992:4, 11).

Because breadfruit can't travel (spoilage a day or two after it's picked), it hasn't become as well-known in New York, Toronto, Paris, Amsterdam, or London as have other tropical delights such as mangos and star-apples, and is often absent from Caribbean cookbooks published for external consumption. And because of its associations in Martinique with old-fashioned country living – eating breadfruit or rootcrops, all classed together as "*légumes*," isn't considered modern or French – many people in their thirties or forties say they don't like it, or that they were fed so much of it as children that they no longer appreciate it, and prefer imported rice or potatoes. So this food, at first rejected by the enslaved Africans for whom it was destined (perhaps in part because it was almost forced upon them), embraced by them after emancipation as their own and made an important staple, and now increasingly viewed by their present-day, modernizing descendants as "country" and "down-scale" (even "folkloric"), has come nearly full circle. But for the

families of Martiniquan fishermen or peasants, not fully engaged in the rush to modernity, it's still a special treat when served at the midday meal, whether eaten with a *court bouillon* of fish or as *migan*.

The noun *migan* and the verb *miganné* are common in Martiniquan and Guadeloupean Creole but don't, according to the scholars we've asked (or dictionaries we have at hand) appear in Haitian or St. Lucian. Apparently derived from Brazilian *migau* ("wheat or manioc pap; [fig.] something very watery or sloppy" [*Pequeno Dicionário Michaelis*]), its French Antillean meaning is "purée" (usually of breadfruit but also sometimes of plantains or of *chou caraïbe* [*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*]) as well as "mixture" or "confusion." As a verb, it can be used to speak straightforwardly of "mixing" ingredients in food preparation but it can also refer, disapprovingly, to socio-sexual activities – a man's life, to cite a common example, may be said to be *miganné*: mixed up with more women than he's able to handle.

For those readers fortunate enough to live in breadfruit country, here's our version of the recipe, as it's prepared in the fishing village where we live:

a very ripe breadfruit, peeled and cut into 5-cm chunks  
 three pig tails or snouts in brine (*salaïson*)  
 a small diced onion  
 two cloves garlic, crushed  
 several sprigs of parsley, chopped  
 salt, black pepper, and thyme to taste  
 one hot pepper, preferably *bonda-man-jak* ("Madame Jacques's  
 derrière" – "scotch bonnet" in the Anglophone islands)  
 juice of half a lime  
 1-2 tablespoons oil

Cook the breadfruit and meat in water to cover until the breadfruit begins to be tender (15 minutes or more, depending on the breadfruit). Add all other ingredients except the juice and oil and continue to simmer until the breadfruit is soft. Add the juice and oil and cook several minutes longer until the breadfruit pieces are suspended in a thick, creamy sauce. Taste frequently after adding the hot pepper so you can take it out when the sauce is sufficiently spicy.

And now to books, beginning with overdue reviews. Several scholars, slightly tardy, have written pleading not to be put on the list of delinquent reviewers that is becoming an annual tradition in these pages, and promising their reviews forthwith. We respect their good intentions and list only those who have, despite reminder letters, apparently shelved the books in their personal libraries, thus depriving both readers of this journal and the

authors of the books the pleasures of public review. Here then is a listing of those books that (as of press time, January 1994) we have been unable to review because those scholars who agreed to do them (identified here by initials in square brackets) have neither provided a review nor returned the books so they might be assigned to someone else. As in the past, this listing may serve as a kind of backlist "books received." (And as always, we would still welcome the submission of any of these reviews, however tardy.) *Cuba After Thirty Years: Rectification and the Revolution*, edited by Richard Gillespie (London: Frank Cass, 1990, cloth £18.00) [J.F.]; *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940*, by K. Lynn Stoner (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, cloth US\$ 42.50, paper US\$ 16.95) [M.N.-A.]; a grouping of three books on education: *Utilization, Misuse, and Development of Human Resources in the Early West Indian Colonies*, by M. K. Bacchus (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1990, paper US\$ 19.95), *Forging Identities and Patterns of Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Harry P. Diaz, Joanna W.A. Rummens & Patrick D.M. Taylor (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991, paper n.p.), and *Colony and Nation: A Short History of Education in Trinidad & Tobago, 1834-1986*, by Carl C. Campbell (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1992, paper US\$ 19.50) [L.C.]; *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*, by Rob Nixon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 35.00) [J.T.]; *Development Strategies as Ideology: Puerto Rico's Export-Led Industrialization Experience*, by Emilio Pantojas-García (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1990, cloth US\$ 34.00) [L.A.]; *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, by Sidney W. Mintz & Richard Price (Boston: Beacon, 1992, cloth US\$ 25.00, paper US\$ 12.00) [K.A.A.]; *Caribbean Asians: Chinese, Indian, and Japanese Experiences in Trinidad and the Dominican Republic*, edited by Roger Sanjek (New York: Asian/American Center at Queens College, 1990, paper n.p.) and *Asians in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Bibliography*, by Lamgen Leon (New York: Asian/American Center, Queens College, 1990, paper n.p.) [B.G.]; *A Photograph Album of Trinidad at the Turn of the Century*, by Gérard Besson (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria, paper n.p.) and *Free Mulatto*, by J.B. Philippe (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria, 1987, paper n.p.) [D.T.]; *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society. An Abridged, Modernized Edition of Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, by John Gabriel Stedman, edited by Richard Price & Sally Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 60.00, paper US\$ 19.95) [I.P.]; a grouping of three books by Bernardo Vega on the twentieth-century Dominican Republic (all Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana): *Eisenhower y Trujillo* (1991,

paper n.p.), *Kennedy y los Trujillo* (1991, paper n.p.), and *Trujillo y el control financiero norteamericano* (1990, paper n.p.) [P.G.]; *Fyffes and the Banana, Musa Sapientum: A Centenary History 1888-1988*, by Peter N. Davies (London: Athlone, 1990, cloth £ 17.95) [M-R.T.].

We begin our annual roundup of books that deserve brief mention with reference works. *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Critical Guide to Research Sources*, edited by Paula H. Covington (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1992, cloth US\$ 115.00), is a useful NEH-funded state-of-the-art survey written by a team of distinguished scholars, each presenting research trends in a particular discipline: anthropology, art & architecture, history, literature, the performing arts, women's studies, and so forth; despite occasional misspellings (e.g., Derx for Derkx) and misattributions (Moreno Friginals's *The Sugarmill* to Stanley Stein), the scholarship is impressive and the annotations in the extensive bibliographic sections are especially helpful. The Quincentenary is represented by the two-volume, illustrated *The Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia*, edited by Silvio A. Bedini (London: Macmillan, 1992, cloth £95.00), for which a stellar cast of international authorities have contributed readable essays on everything from Astrolabes and Burial Places of Columbus through Cannibalism and Icelandic Sagas to First Visual Impressions in Europe. *Women in the Caribbean: A Bibliography 1986-1990*, by Irene Rolfes (Leiden: KITLV, 1992, paper NLG 35.00), follows upon similar volumes published by the same research unit in 1979 and 1985; it presents a single alphabetical listing of 1585 relevant works, covering the diaspora as well as the islands and including unpublished theses, all without annotation. *Scholars' Guide to Washington, D.C., for Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, by Michael Grow, second edition revised by Craig VanGrasstek (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, paper US\$ 19.95) provides useful practical details on local libraries, archives, map collections, foreign embassies, international organizations, and even bookstores that feature Caribbean publications; indispensable for Caribbeanists planning a stay in Clintonville. The two-volume *Writers of the Caribbean and Central America: A Bibliography*, by M.J. Fenwick (New York: Garland, 1992, cloth n.p.), moves through the broad region alphabetically, "country"-by-"country," to list writers with titles and dates of selected publications but no annotation of any kind; claiming to be a research tool that brings together literatures long separated by colonial and national barriers, the work reads more like a computer printout and contains numerous errors – we are told, for example, that "Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique and St. Martin are still French colonies," that Suriname's poet Dobru (Robin Ravales), who died a decade ago, is alive, and that André Schwarz-Bart was born in Guadeloupe.

Three dictionaries and a historical gazetteer have come our way. *Dictionary of St. Lucian Creole. Part 1: Kwéyòl-English, Part 2: English-Kwéyòl*, compiled by Jones E. Mondesir and edited by Lawrence D. Carrington (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992, cloth DM 298.00) is an impressive achievement, the thirty-year-long painstaking compilation of a St. Lucian educator which has been expertly revised by a leading creolist; the entries are rich in grammatical examples and convey much of the liveliness of St. Lucian daily life and lore. *Wortubuku ini Sranan Tongo (Sranan Tongo – English Dictionary)* and *Wortubuku ini Sranan Tongo (Sranan Tongo – Nederlands Woordenboek)*, each edited by John Wilner (Paramaribo: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1992, paper n.p.), are dictionaries-in-progress, still very partial after five years of work, and published to elicit comments and improvements; a serious, long-term project that deserves encouragement. *Histo-ri-sch-Geo-gra-fisch Woordenboek van Suriname*, by A.J. van der Aa, edited by René Janssen & Okke ten Hove, with Wim Hoogbergen (Utrecht: Bronnen voor de Studies van Afro-Surinaamse Samenlevingen, 1993, paper NLG 20.00), is a modest work that includes relevant excerpts from Van der Aa's 13-volume gazetteer of the vast Dutch empire, published 1839-49, here mainly brief entries organized by names of Suriname plantations.

Several general works on the region. *Caribbean World: A Complete Geography*, by Neil Sealey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, paper £7.95) is a textbook designed for secondary schools but covers a wide range of basic information on natural systems, populations, and economy. *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and the Carib to the Present*, by Jan Rogozinski (New York: Facts on File, 1992, cloth US\$ 24.95), presents a whirlwind tour, from "the gentle Arawak" and "warlike Carib" to Operation Urgent Fury, piling unproblematic "fact" upon "fact" without references or suggestions for further reading, for what audience or to what end remains unclear. *Britain's Dependent Territories: A Fistful of Islands*, by George Drower (Aldershot, Hants: Dartmouth, 1992, cloth £32.50), points out that in terms of numbers of "dependent territories" – what used to be called "colonies" – Britain still has the world's largest empire, from Pitcairn, Gibraltar, the Falklands, and Hong Kong to (closer to home) Anguilla, Bermuda, the BVIs, the Caymans, Monserrat, and the Turks & Caicos; the book examines individual cases as well as more general policy implications. *The Golden Quest: The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, by Michael Anthony (London: Macmillan, 1992, paper £5.95), is an unpretentious retelling of the familiar story, apparently for West Indian (high-school level?) consumption, best when its cadences graze the calypsonian. *Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean*, by Jenifer Marx (Malabar FL: Krieger, 1992, cloth US\$ 32.50), is a lively, intelligent popular history.

Several reprints have appeared. We report the reissue (in facsimile) of *Christopher Codrington 1668-1710*, by Vincent T. Harlow (New York: St. Martin's, 1990, cloth US\$ 39.95), the standard biography of the Governor-General of the Leeward Islands at the dawn of the eighteenth century, originally published in 1928. *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave, Esteban Montejo*, by Miguel Barnet (London: Macmillan, 1993, paper £13.95), includes a useful new introduction and bibliographical essay by Alistair Hennessy that helps contextualize this important literary work. *Atlantic American Societies: From Columbus through Abolition 1492-1888*, edited by Alan L. Karras & J.R. McNeill (London: Routledge, 1992, cloth US\$ 55.00, paper US\$ 16.95), anthologizes – presumably for classroom use – eight articles published by historians during the last two decades.

Miscellanea worthy of note: *The Material Culture of the Wapishana People of the South Rupununi Savannas in 1989*, by Janette Forte, Laureen Pierre & Desrey Fox (Georgetown: Amerindian Research Unit of the University of Guyana, 1992, paper n.p.), the fruit of a several-week-long expedition, constitutes a Cook's tour of contemporary Wapishana life and problems, including their complex relations with the world outside. A different perspective on Guyana is provided by *Observing Guyana's Electoral Process, 1990-1992*, report of The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government (Atlanta: The Carter Center, 1993, paper n.p.), which chronicles the role of international observers in monitoring the Jagan victory. *And I Remember Many Things ... Folklore of the Caribbean*, compiled and edited by Christine Barrow (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1992, cloth US\$ 10.95), is a collection of stories and reminiscences, little poetic gems, illustrated with charcoal drawings by Wendy Donawa, and intended as an antidote for Caribbean children growing up in a world of television and fast food.

A major historical work, winner of the 1992 Elsa Goveia prize, reached us too late for review, but merits mention: *Sugar is Made With Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba*, by Robert L. Paquette (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988, cloth US\$ 30.00, paper US\$ 16.95). Despite repeated attempts, we regret that academic politics have prevented us from finding a scholar willing to review *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti*, by Michel S. Laguerre (New York: St. Martin's, 1989, cloth US\$ 35.00). *Het gedrukte woord in de Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba*, by J. Hartog (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1992, paper NLG 39,50), lovingly traces the history of two centuries of Dutch Antillian printing, libraries, and bookstores, providing details on collections in both the Caribbean and the metropole.

A trip to Belize acquainted us with three recent travel books: *Inside Belize*, by Tom Barry (Albuquerque: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource

Center, 1992, paper US\$ 9.95), an excellent tour through local society, politics, economy, and culture; *Belize Guide*, by Paul Glassman (Champlain NY: Passport Press, 1991, paper US\$ 13.95), a reliable Baedeker; and *The Very Rich Hours: Travels in Orkney, Belize, the Everglades, and Greece*, by Emily Hiestand (Boston: Beacon, 1992, paper US\$ 12.00), which spins brief encounters with Belizean nature and people into delicate prose. We were also introduced to Belize's premier publishing house, Cubola Productions (located in Benque Viejo de Carmen, right next to the border with Guatemala), whose books deserve wider international attention and distribution. Among their recent publications of Caribbeanist interest, still in stock in 1993, are: *Heart Drum: Spirit Possession in the Garifuna Communities of Belize*, by Byron Foster (1986, revised edition 1994, paper n.p.), which summarizes the author's Cambridge dissertation; *The Baymen's Legacy*, by Byron Foster (1992, paper US\$ 11.00), a historical introduction to Belize City, characterized on the jacket as "Dickensian London on the shores of the Caribbean"; *Party Politics in Belize, 1950-1986*, by Assad Shoman (1987, revised edition 1994, paper n.p.), political analysis by a leading Belizean intellectual; and four works of literature – *Old Benque: Erase una vez en Benque Viejo...*, by David N. Ruiz Puga (1990, paper US\$ 9.00), short stories in Spanish; *On Heroes, Lizards, and Passion*, by Zoila M. Ellis (1988, paper n.p.), a first book of short stories; *Pataki Full: Seven Belizean Short Stories*, by Colville Young (1991, paper US\$ 9.00), the Belizean creolist; and *Shots from the Heart: Three Young Belizean Poets*, by Yasser Musa, Kiren Shoman & Simone Waight (1991, paper US\$ 9.00).

Several books on religion merit note. *Doctrina para negros: Explicación de la doctrina cristiana acomodada a la capacidad de los negros bozales*, by Nicolás Duque de Estrada, transcribed and introduced by Javier Laviña (Barcelona: Sendai, 1989, paper n.p.), publishes a late eighteenth-century Cuban manuscript from the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, with a rich historical introduction. *Kerkwandel & lekenhandel: De rooms-katholieke kerk op Curaçao*, edited by B. Boudewijnse, H. Middelbrink & C. van de Woestijne (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1992, paper NLG 29.50), presents six anthropological and historical essays on the influence of the R.C. Church on daily life in Curaçao. *Descubrir a Dios en el Caribe: Ensayos sobre la historia de la iglesia*, by Armando Lampe (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial DEI, 1991, paper n.p.), presents essays on Curaçao and Haiti by this Aruban cleric-historian. *Mission in Chains: The Life, Theology and Ministry of the Ex-Slave Jacobus E.J. Capitein (1717-1747), with a Translation of his Major Publications*, by David Nii Anum Kpobi (Zoetermeer: Boekcentrum, 1993, paper NLG 45.00), focuses on the life of this eighteenth-century man, born on the Gold Coast, who after serving as a child-slave, studied as a freedman in the Netherlands,



and became Dutch Reformed minister for the West India Company at Elmina Castle.

A callaloo of cookbooks and related works. *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*, edited by Nelson Foster & Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 24.95), presents a series of readable scholarly essays on tomatoes, potatoes, vanilla, maize, beans, capsicums, and a host of other New World contributions to world diet. A paean to pre-revolutionary upper class privilege (as well as the good life in Miami), *Memories of a Cuban Kitchen*, by Mary Urrutia Randelman & Joan Schwartz (New York: Macmillan, 1992, cloth US\$ 25.00), offers some excellent recipes, served up with wit. There are a number of slimmer culinary volumes. First a pair, *Creative Jamaican Cooking & Menus* and *Creative Bahamian Cooking & Menus*, both by Elsa Miller & Leonard "Sonny" Henry (and both Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1991, paper US\$ 6.95), which share many of their relatively simple recipes. Then three more ambitious cookbooks from The Crossing Press (Freedom CA): *Jerk: Barbecue from Jamaica*, by Helen Willinsky (1990, paper US\$ 10.95), filled with helpful hints for fiery backyard barbecues, *Callaloo, Calypso & Carnival: The Cuisines of Trinidad & Tobago*, by Dave DeWitt & Mary Jane Wilan (1993, paper US\$ 10.95), which mixes travel tips and recipes, and *Caribbean Deserts*, by John DeMers (1992, paper n.p.), whose author knows his sweets, from street vendors to hotel kitchens – we're hoping our fruit ripens before Christmas so we can try his "chocolate-glazed soursop cake." Finally, *Cooking with Caribbean Rum*, by Laurel-Ann Morley (London: Macmillan, 1991, paper n.p.), despite its featured ingredient, has that *Family Circle* magazine look and too many glazed and canned pineappled concoctions for our taste.

Three oversized photo books. *Isles of Eden: Life in the Southern Family Islands of the Bahamas*, by Harvey Lloyd (Akron OH: Benjamin, 1991, cloth US\$ 65.00), juxtaposes breathtaking, often-moving images (mainly portraits) with sparse verbal fragments from out-islanders. *Caribbean Camera: A Journey through the Islands*, photos by Oliver Benn and introduction by Lennox Honychurch (London: Macmillan, 1992, cloth £19.95), collects images from here and there, but without any apparent point. *The Black Trans-Atlantic Experience: Street Life and Culture in Ghana, Jamaica, England, and the United States*, by Stephen Marc (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 49.95), is a rich, multifaceted album by an African American fine-art-oriented documentary photographer.

Literary works that we've received include: a beautiful bilingual edition of the long poem, *The Indies/Les Indes*, by Edouard Glissant (Toronto: GREF, 1992, paper n.p.); an excellent and nicely representative anthology, *Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam: Short Stories by Caribbean Women*, edited

by Carmen C. Esteves & Lizabèth Paravisini-Gebert (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991, paper US\$ 11.95); a wonderful celebration of the cultural richness and diversity of Suriname, *Sirito: 50 Surinaamse vertellingen*, compiled by Michiel van Kempen with Jan Bongers (Paramaribo: Kennedy Stichting, 1993, paper n.p.); a new edition of a standard anthology that keeps all the original selections and adds half again as many new ones, *Caribbean Poetry Now*, edited by Stewart Brown (London: Edward Arnold, 1992, paper US\$ 10.95); two original books of Caribbean poetry (both London: New Beacon, 1992, cloth £10.95, paper £5.95), written from opposite sides of the Atlantic, *Examination Centre* by Mervyn Morris and *Eyelets of Truth within Me* by John La Rose; a Belizean novel, *In Times Like These*, by Zee Edgell (Oxford: Heinemann, 1991, paper £4.99), that pivots around the moment of independence but in our view lacks the passion of her earlier *Beka Lamb*; and a collection of important political writings, with a fine introduction by Franklin Knight, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings 1920-1972*, edited by W. Burghardt Turner & Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, paper £ 16.50).

Literary activity in Martinique has continued apace. French publishers are still refusing to send us review copies, so the following comments are limited to those works we happen to have bought ourselves. Each of the most active local novelists made a contribution this year, some achieving fame and riches as a result. Patrick Chamoiseau won the Prix Goncourt for *Texaco* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992, paper FF 120), an epic covering the last two centuries of Martiniquan history from the perspective of the twentieth-century urban neighborhood in the book's title. Raphaël Confiant won the Casa de las Americas prize for *Ravines du devant-jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper FF 85), a muscular memoir of his childhood, following on the heels of his Prix Novembre for *Eau de café* (Paris: Grasset, 1991, paper FF 115). Xavier Orville published *Coeur à vie* (Paris: Stock, 1993, FF 98), continuing his highly precious series of fantasies about the island. With *Fenm Dèwó* (Schoelcher, Martinique: Éditions M.G.G., 1993, paper n.p.) Tony Delsham added another to his popular quasi-pulp novels aimed largely at Martiniquan women. *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper, FF 78) is a bi-lingual edition of Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau & Raphaël Confiant's 1989 manifesto; the English text, originally published in the journal *Callaloo*, is filled with malapropisms and errors, but the arrogance and frequent ignorance of the original are faithfully retained. And, saving the best for last, Édouard Glissant has just published *Tout-Monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper, FF 160), a richly-layered, poetic, self-referential novel that, while anchored in Martinique, takes the world as its subject.

Finally, a lavish art catalogue touches our own expertise and merits brief comment: *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas*, by Robert Farris Thompson (New York: Museum for African Art, 1993, paper US\$ 39.50). A characteristic mixture of visionary, flamboyant prose, insouciant scholarship, inadequate citations, and parachute ethnography, this massive catalogue covers large swaths of the black Atlantic world. It bristles with ideas and images, many of them stimulating and conducive to further historical research. But as RFT once reflectively remarked to us about his work, "Let the others dot the i's and cross the t's!" As far as Suriname is concerned, we note here only that Thompson (in an exoticizing move like that of the New York ice-cream executive who made up the Scandinavian-sounding name "Häagen-Dazs" for his product) renames the Ndjuka "Ndjuká"; that he freely uses the periodization of Saramaka art history, which the two of us created after long-term fieldwork, without ever citing the book where it is developed (Price & Price 1980, an omission repeating that in his well-known *Flash of the Spirit*, which also drew significantly on that work); that he places in his exhibit at the Museum for African Art what are labeled "Two Tapanahoni River Flag Altars" (with small photos of the originals in situ), one of which is in fact in the Saramaka capital, many river days removed from the Tapanahoni; and that the latter altar (a "representation" according to one label, an "evocation" according to another) has its cloths hung backwards, its doors opening in the wrong direction, and no space for people to sit, pour libations, or communicate with the ancestors (which is what the original altar is for). Thompson's claim (p. 129) that a section of the book is designed to "honor Richard Price's research" is ultimately less than flattering. For much of the scholarship is reminiscent of the classic openwork Saramaka door that Thompson installed in a Yale Art Gallery exhibition twenty-five years ago, backlit, at eye-level, and identified as a window (an architectural feature absent among Saramakas). Like his earlier work, as described in a balanced and detailed review by Arnoldi & Karp (1985)<sup>2</sup>, this ambitious book is "a curious amalgam of insights and unsubstantiated assertions" in which, to bring us back to a culinary metaphor, "the successful [trans-Atlantic] comparisons are the raisins sparsely populating the rice pudding of failed speculation."

#### NOTES

1. This end-of-year review continues the tradition of culinary metaphors begun by its predecessors: "Caribbean Pepper-Pot" (*NWIG* 58:89-98), "Callaloo" (*NWIG* 66:95-99), and "Run-down" (*NWIG* 67:101-8).

2. We quote Arnoldi & Karp's original text which they sent us in typescript; the printed version was edited to remove the rice pudding.

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RICHARD & SALLY PRICE  
Anse Chaudière  
97217 Anses d'Arlet, Martinique

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature.* SIMON GIKANDI.  
Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. x + 260 pp. (Cloth US\$ 40.65)

PETER HULME  
Department of Literature  
University of Essex  
Colchester CO4 3SQ, England

Simon Gikandi's premise, simple, indisputable, yet rarely investigated with such subtlety, "is that Caribbean writers cannot adopt the history and culture of European modernism, especially as defined by the colonizing structures, but neither can they escape from it because it has overdetermined Caribbean cultures in many ways" (p. 3). *Writing in Limbo* takes as its subject matter writing that has concerned itself explicitly or implicitly with this fundamental problematic.

In what space can a poetics of Caribbean writing be articulated?, Gikandi asks, after Glissant (p. 12). The Introduction to *Writing in Limbo* contributes to the developing discussion of the language of "in betweenness": "limbo," of course, after Brathwaite and Harris, but also "creolization" and "marronage." Here, at any rate, Gikandi shows a welcome willingness to associate cultural criticism in English with its counterparts in French and Spanish: Glissant, Césaire, Martí, and Depestre help Gikandi situate his project, alongside Walcott, Lamming, and James. The first chapter, also introductory to the book's main themes, then contains fine readings of George Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* and C.L.R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*, certainly two of the most significant works of non-fiction to come out of the Caribbean.

These two important situating chapters are followed by six major sets of analyses, taking as their material the early novels of Lamming, the Trinidad novels of Sam Selvon, Alejo Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces*, the novels of Paule Marshall, Merle Hodge, and Zee Edgell, and finally Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*. So, rather than attempting a broad survey, Gikandi chooses a dozen or so novels, each of which is given ten or twelve pages of very careful reading, attuned to the attitudes of "anxiety and ambivalence" towards the modern project which is Gikandi's theme, but extremely alert to each novelist's particular registration of this anxiety. Especially in the cases of Hodge, Edgell, and Cliff, where there is little secondary literature of substance, these readings are likely to become the benchmark studies. Indeed, in these last two chapters Gikandi suggests with due circumspection that *Crick Crack*, *Monkey*, *Beka Lamb*, and *Abeng* form part of what might come to be seen as a major challenge to the gendered assumptions of nationalist discourse. Here – in a typically imaginative move – he makes good use of the approach of Jean Franco in her *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (1989).

Reservations about the book's achievement are minor. There is throughout a certain lack of clarity over the various cognates of "modern." The book opens with 1492 as the beginning of the "modern" era (as authorized by Tzvetan Todorov). "Modernism" – as in Gikandi's title – is usually employed these days as an aesthetic term, "modernization" – not in evidence in Gikandi – in sociological accounts of "development," with "modernity" occupying some portion of the middle ground in its attempt to capture the *sense* of technological change as registered in the integuments of everyday life and consciousness. Gikandi is aware of, for example, Marshall Berman's influential discussion of these terms in his *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (1984), but ultimately pays little attention to such important distinctions, tending to let "modernism" cover the whole range of meanings. The justification for this move – by no means negligible – is that it focuses attention on a "modern" project initiated at the beginning of, and sustained by, the European empires in the Caribbean: Gikandi's authors are all in some way writing about that project. There are, however, two possible drawbacks. First, the generalization of the term "modernism" leaves little opportunity for the discussion of "modernist" form in a more literary sense of the word (which would certainly have been necessary had Wilson Harris been one of the novelists analyzed). And second, the elision of "modernization" tends to deflect discussion onto a more philosophical plane, away from the pressing realities of the contemporary Caribbean, where "modernization" is such a force. At the end of the day, though, however much one might have wished to see an account of the tension between these various aspects of "the mod-

ern," Gikandi's pursuit of his broader conception of "Caribbean modernism" pays ample dividends in the space it gives him to read the novels with something like the detailed attention they all deserve but rarely enjoy.

*Writing in Limbo* takes the fiction of the Caribbean seriously and helps integrate its study into a wider American problematic. Simon Gikandi is a theoretically informed critic able to draw with assurance on the work of de Certeau and Derrida, Bakhtin and Benjamin, Laclau and Lyotard. One never feels that the names are there for show: indeed complex material is introduced in a sure-footed manner which neither mystifies nor vulgarizes. And yet as, say, Sam Selvon's "Tiger" novels are (genuinely) illuminated through references to Deleuze and de Man, Jameson and Lacan, one wonders whether at least some of this work could not have been done as effectively by Caribbean theorists who get no mention – Ortiz, Fernández Retamar, Pérez Firmat, Benítez-Rojo, to name only a few. Even James, Walcott, Brathwaite, and the formidable Glissant appear only in the introductory chapters. There is a sense here that the book's critical practice runs somewhat counter to its theses.

The final note must, however, be positive. This is a powerfully argued book written in a limpid style. It marks its terrain with great assurance and conducts its textual analyses with a fine attention to detail. *Writing in Limbo* is the best book on its topic and ranks with Patrick Taylor's *The Narrative of Liberation* (1989) as one of the most significant recent advances in the criticism of Caribbean literature.

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*Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean (Volume 1 – Spectre of the New Class: The Commonwealth Caribbean)*. ALISTAIR HENNESSY (ed.). London: Macmillan, 1992. xvii + 204 pp. (Paper £12.95)

CHARLES V. CARNEGIE  
Department of Sociology & Anthropology  
Bates College  
Lewiston ME 04240, U.S.A.

This timely collection is the first of a two-volume selection of papers from a symposium put on by the Centre for Caribbean Studies at the University of Warwick in 1987. The second promises to focus on the Spanish- and French-speaking Caribbean; a more complete assessment, therefore, must await publication of the companion volume.

Individual papers outline theoretical ideas against which intellectual activity in the English-speaking Caribbean might be evaluated, discuss the institutional context within which it has occurred, articulate a few of the central questions that continue to motivate Caribbean thought, discuss ways in which Caribbean intellectual life has had impact beyond the region, and single out for fuller treatment the work of a few West Indian thinkers. But for a region so implicated in the political events of the century, and as fertile of intellectual production as the Caribbean has been, it is clear that one can expect many works and much debate on any one of these topics. This volume of essays, then, invites response and disagreement.

Several of the lacunae, and issues that might provoke debate and fruitful research by others, are nicely prefigured in the two essays by editor Alistair Hennessy that frame the collection. The need to find ways of including creative contributions from the oral tradition, the call for fuller inquiry into the peripatetic existence led by so many Caribbean thinkers, and the conventional disregard by humanists and social scientists of pioneering work done in the natural sciences, are but a few of the examples Hennessy points to.

While individual essays provide useful analyses of the institutional support system for intellectual activity (notably, that by Gouldbourne on the UWI), and the conditions that served to mould outstanding Caribbean thinkers (e.g., essays by Worcester on C.L.R. James, and by Sutton comparing Eric Williams and Walter Rodney), discussion of the *social* context of Caribbean intellectual life calls for much fuller and more critical treatment than it receives.

Not only does the collection (understandably) focus on a few outstanding individuals, but it removes them from the community of discourse from which, no doubt, they gained succor – a less excusable oversight, especially



in the decades before the establishment of the University. The informal pathways that connected friends and kin, that perhaps crossed the lines of discipline and colonial territorial boundary, and that were walked by luminaries of Caribbean thought such as Arthur Lewis, Hugh Wooding, Una Marson, and Thomas Lecky in their formative years (to name but a few not mentioned in the present collection), need to be cleared, "bushed out," and explored. With whom did they converse and about what? What were the institutional precursors of the UWI? What of the Institute of Jamaica, Codrington and the other theological seminaries, the Mico, and the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture? And even in the Caribbean of today, can we simply presume that the hegemonic University of the West Indies has (or should have) a monopoly on intellectual production? Does not the intellectual agitation and discontent at the local level that leads to the formation of, say, the Folk Research Centre or the Caribbean Research Centre – both in St. Lucia, both underfunded – have important lessons for us as we begin this conversation in evaluation?

These questions imply as well the suggestion that present-day Caribbean thinkers have been relatively uncritical about their own practices, and the institutions they inhabit. Hennessy observes with insight: "In the immediate post-independence period intellectuals faced difficult choices. As part of the successor élite they were pressured to be involved in public life by becoming bureaucrats. If intellectuals are characterized by independent thinking an intellectual in a bureaucracy and subject to governmental pressures is a contradiction in terms" (p. 8). But the region's governments also control, directly or indirectly, then and now, the funding to support most research activity and the University itself. The national project – as political goal and analytical paradigm – has been both stimulus and constraint to intellectual work. Several of the papers in the collection recognize and articulate aspects of this symbiosis (e.g., the essays by Surin on James's materialist aesthetic of cricket, by Bolland on creolization, and by Sutton on Williams and Rodney), and some reach gropingly toward a transcendence of the territorial (e.g., Nettleford on *négritude* and Surin on James). Yet their critical vision appears muted (even scholars such as these, most "outsiders," and relatively independent of Caribbean states) in the absence of a new paradigm that might supersede the national one. The germ of such a paradigm may well lie in the work of some among that earlier generation of Caribbean intellectuals whose ideas were at once grounded in place, and transcendent of it.

Two paradoxes ought to be noted in closing, both of which underscore the necessary incompleteness of an enterprise such as this, its inherently perspectival nature, and the need to reach for new horizons of understanding.

The first is that there are no papers in the collection to treat substantively the contributions of women to Caribbean intellectual life. The editor's explanation – that the (only) person invited to the conference to address the issue chose to present something else – is hardly satisfying given the fact that the three essays included on C.L.R. James were all solicited after the symposium. The second is that, of the nine contributors to this volume, only one is by a Caribbean intellectual currently practicing in the region.

*The Caribbean Artists Movement, 1966-1972: A Literary and Cultural History.* ANNE WALMSLEY. London: New Beacon Books, 1992. xx + 356 pp. (Cloth £35.00, Paper £15.95)

NIGEL RIGBY  
*Wasafiri*  
 PO Box 195  
 Canterbury CT2 7XB, England

The Caribbean Artists Movement was conceived by its three founders, Kamau Brathwaite, John La Rose, and Andrew Salkey, as a gathering of novelists, poets, artists, publishers, and critics who would come together to "discover their own aesthetic and to chart new directions for their arts and culture" (p. xvii). From its beginning in London during the 1960s, CAM's meetings were tape recorded, and notices and letters were carefully preserved. "CAM's founder-members," Anne Walmsley explains, "always envisaged that its history would, in time, be fully documented and made public" (p. xviii). With the publication of her well-researched book, it now has. The book collects the records into a comprehensive and readable narrative of this once influential cultural movement. Through the careers and work of individual members, she traces the story of CAM from its small beginnings, through its few years of prominence, to its eventual decline. Her extensive use of documents and transcriptions allows their voices to be heard – speaking, arguing, reading, criticizing, analyzing, and philosophizing – and superbly captures the sheer energy and exuberance of the movement.

Members shared the concern to "reassert their own tradition in the face of the dominant tradition" of Europe (p. xvii), and CAM provided the intellectual platform for the artistic development of a challenging and provocative Caribbean voice. Brathwaite's influential article, "Jazz and the West Indian Novel," was first given as a paper at one of CAM's early meetings. One delightful irony, in the context of the intellectual search for the voice

of the people, is the disruption that the genuine article sometimes caused by heckling from the back of the hall.

Walmsley says that she has deliberately avoided analysis, preferring the role of "unobtrusive narrator." She reports the heated debates that took place, and in particular illustrates the contributions made by Kamau Brathwaite on the centrality of Caribbean popular culture, but at times she hesitates to assess the broader issues: to see, for example, Louis James's controversial paper questioning the role of "dialect" as a contribution to a debate, at a time when the very concept of a Caribbean literature was being thrashed out. CAM's debate on the question of a Caribbean voice benefited many individual artists, as Walmsley demonstrates. For artists living in "exile" in an increasingly racist Britain (Enoch Powell's infamous "rivers of blood" speech was given in the middle of CAM's most creative period), CAM's shared aesthetic was an important symbolic and actual presence. An intriguing question raised by the book is why CAM had such a short life, despite its influence and the energy of its members. Walmsley's narrative supports the view of John La Rose that "attempts to politicise CAM were responsible for its intense, creative phase coming to an end after the Second Conference" (p. 309). Indeed, this politicization was almost inevitable in the climate of the time. But the debates that Walmsley reports suggest that its early demise was partially caused by the radical intellectual basis of CAM itself. Writers such as Wilson Harris and C.L.R. James and artists like Aubrey Williams, who argued that "standard" literary forms had a place within the Caribbean aesthetic, found the prevailing Afro-Caribbean voice of protest, shaped by the folk-tradition, to be constraining. The Trinidadian writer, Michael Anthony, felt that if he stayed in Britain, "he might be expected to write 'race' novels, which were not in his nature..." (p. 103).

Writers like V.S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott, who refused to be tied to a shared aesthetic, were considered to be implicitly or explicitly on the "side" of Europe. Wilson Harris removed himself from a central role in CAM after the second conference. While this could have been a reaction against the growing politicization, it is also likely that Harris recognized that CAM was, in effect, substituting one hegemony for another.

In her final chapter Walmsley identifies the many positive legacies of CAM: supporting and encouraging young writers; challenging the dominance of European art; giving Caribbean art a higher profile; promoting Caribbean literature as a subject for academic study; founding *Savacou*; and being the "ancestor" of The International Book Fair of Radical and Third World Books. Walmsley's book is weakened by her reluctance to analyze the fascinating debates she narrates, which allows CAM and its legacy to remain largely unquestioned. The great strength of her book is that it pro-

vides a carefully researched platform for future historians of Caribbean literature to investigate the many ambivalences and contradictions of CAM. For anyone involved in Caribbean art, Anne Walmsley's book is an essential and thoroughly recommended resource. It raises more questions that it attempts to answer, perhaps, but the questions themselves will spark considerable debate in the future.

*Claude McKay: A Black Poet's Struggle for Identity.* TYRONE TILLERY. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992. xii + 235 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95)

CARL PEDERSEN  
Institute for Languages and Culture  
University of Roskilde, PO Box 260  
4000 Roskilde, Denmark

Coming five years after Wayne Cooper's biography, *Claude McKay: Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance* (1987), Tyrone Tillery's book is only the second full-length study of one of the most important figures in black literature and politics in the first half of the twentieth century. Claude McKay was more than a writer of the Harlem Renaissance. His literary production spanned four decades and ranged from dialect poetry to standard verse, novels to short stories, and essays and journalism to autobiography. Although McKay has been thought of primarily as an African-American writer, his impact on Caribbean literature is considerable. "Our literature begins with McKay in exile," the Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite once declared, and the influence of McKay's experiments in dialect verse can be seen in the work of such writers as Louise Bennett. Furthermore, McKay's second novel, *Banjo* (1929), provided ideas and inspiration to Francophone black writers from the Caribbean and Africa, including Aimé Césaire and Leopold Sedar Senghor, who once called McKay "the true inventor of *négritude*."

All this is lost in Tillery's study. Although his stated aim is to offer "an interpretation of the life and work of Claude McKay," Tillery randomly edits out those aspects of McKay's life and work that fail to conform to his overwhelmingly negative perspective. Indeed, the portrait Tillery paints of McKay is so antipathetic that it is puzzling why he would choose to devote so much effort to study such an unattractive personality and substandard writer. Tillery dismisses McKay's fiction as "characterized by exotic and

primitive sensationalism" (p. 103). McKay's claim, in a 1932 essay entitled "A Negro Writer to His Critics," that "it was not until I was forced down among the rough body of the great serving class of Negroes that I got to know my Aframerica" is rejected by Tillery, who asserts that McKay's "association with the black masses had never been voluntary; it had occurred as a result of his own failure at middle-class pursuits" (p. 112). On the political front McKay is portrayed as having been blinded by his personal hatred of the Communists, which "prevented him from acknowledging that many Communists ... were sincerely interested in helping blacks" (p. 159). In what passes for a conclusion to this study of "a black poet's struggle for identity," Tillery exclaims that "rather than accept personal responsibility for poor judgments ... McKay placed blame on external agents ... He credited only himself when he achieved a success; he blamed everyone but himself when he suffered a failure" (p. 163).

In order to construct such a scathing psychological profile, Tillery engages in a subjective omission of the sides of McKay's life and work that might raise questions about his assertions. For example, he understates the significance of McKay's Caribbean background, largely ignores his views on Garveyism, and provides only a truncated examination of his third novel, *Banana Bottom* (1933). McKay's collection of short stories, *Gingertown* (1932), which contains five stories set in Jamaica, is mentioned only in passing. Tillery's discussion of *Home to Harlem* (1928) revolves around the criticism it received from the African-American intellectual community more than an examination of McKay's intent in writing the book. However, there is little mention of the critical response to McKay's last novel, *Banana Bottom*, which for many is his most successful. What Tillery sees as McKay's shift to racial chauvinism is pinpointed to a single incident in 1922 rather than being depicted as the result of a host of complex factors grounded in his position as a Caribbean in exile. Paradoxically, Tillery regards McKay as a racial chauvinist who nevertheless refused to accept the opinions of his fellow black intellectuals.

Tillery's study in no way fulfills his intention of interpreting McKay's life and work. It is, rather, a series of essays, loosely strung together by biographical material, aiming to discredit McKay's work by pointing to the inadequacies of his personality. At one point, Tillery accuses McKay of "misremembrance or conscious reconstruction of the past" (p. 31). Tillery himself seems to be a victim of the same tendency that he disparages in his subject. Those unfamiliar with McKay would do better to turn to Cooper's biography, which offers a more positive but by no means uncritical assessment of Claude McKay.

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*The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*. IRVING ROUSE. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. xii + 211 pp. (Cloth US\$ 25.00)

SIMONE DREYFUS  
Equipe de Recherche en Ethnologie Amérindienne  
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales  
75006 Paris, France

Since the appearance of the *Handbook of South American Indians* in the late 1940s, a great deal of important work has been published, much of which has completely redefined our understanding of the indigenous societies of South America, in terms of both history and social structure. Irving Rouse, author of the *Handbook* chapters devoted to the inhabitants of the Caribbean who were exterminated by European conquest, has contributed importantly, in his role as archaeologist, to this enrichment of our knowledge. Yet it seems possible that in taking on an ethnohistorical project, he has continued to use the theoretical framework of North American cultural anthropology from the 1940s, which causes him to neglect the institutions, social structures, and political systems of these island societies at the moment of their fatal contact with the Europeans.

This book, written on the occasion of the Quincentenary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus, presents the history of the successive peoples who inhabited the Antilles and describes their cultural development up to the end of the fifteenth century. His chronology of the region's overall cultural history, within which specific cultures are both defined and characterized by their material remains, is extremely useful to specialists. Rouse emphasizes the fact that today's archaeology does not treat material remains as isolated cultural traits, or "trait-units," but tries rather to delineate cultural wholes by teasing out "site-units" to be re-grouped in series or lines of development.

General readers, for whom this book is also written, will learn that the first inhabitants of the islands (called the Casimiroids) came from the continent, probably the Yucatán or Central America, around 4000 B.C. and settled in Cuba and the western part of Hispaniola, not venturing further. Two

thousand years later, people called the Ortoiroids, probably arriving from the Orinoco via Trinidad (which was then attached to the continent) settled along the coastlines of the islands in very dispersed communities. At the beginning of the present era (approximately 300 B.C.-400 A.D.), other peoples from the Orinoco basin spread throughout the archipelago. The culture of these so-called "Saladoids," ancestors of all the peoples who lived on the islands in the historic period, underwent local and regional transformations over the centuries, eventually forming two contrastive socio-cultural groupings: the Taino, who lived in the Greater Antilles and the Virgin Islands, and the people known as Island Caribs, who lived in the Lesser Antilles.

Rouse points out that many scholars have tended simply to trace these people to a continental origin on the mere basis of ceramic style, linguistic ties (all the languages spoken in the island chain at the time of the Europeans' arrival belonged to the Arawakan family, which originated in the Amazonian basin), and on "racial continuity" between skeletons found in the islands and on the continent; local developments and their effects on cultural formation were largely neglected. Our knowledge of these cultural processes is, however, necessarily incomplete. Archaeologists studying these tropical cultures without writing or lithic monuments, whose artifactual production is based principally on perishable materials, have a difficult task in interpreting their social organization and the shape of historical changes. For the Caribbean, historical documentation from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offers some help, by providing important information on social realities during this later period.

Rouse drew, of course, on these materials, but he took less advantage of them than he might have. He writes that the only "primary sources" on Columbus's voyages are his abridged diaries as published by Las Casas and a letter written by the Admiral to the Spanish monarchs (p. 140). In fact, however, the complete diary has now been published, and we have long had the famous letter of Doctor Chanca, the physician who accompanied him on his second voyage, as well as the eight "*décades*" of the *Orbe novo* by Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, begun in 1493-94 and based on oral testimony given by Columbus himself and his closest companions. Quite a few other sixteenth-century sources also go unmentioned in Rouse's book, as do a number of more recent anthropological/historical studies of Taino chiefdoms and on the territorial and political organization of the so-called Caribs, perhaps because they are not available in English. Although there are limitations on the portrait that is possible for us to paint of Taino society, all these studies do allow us to reconstruct a strictly hierarchized political system based on territorial divisions and interlocked local powers – of which we are told nothing in Rouse's book.

The social divisions were designated by the names of categories – *naboria* (dependents, not “commoners,” as Rouse says on p. 9), *taino* (nobles, who were further divided into three hierarchized sub-categories), and *kacik* (a term for “paramount chiefs” that has passed into most European languages, not just English). This social organization was accompanied (and made possible) by an intensive exploitation of the natural resources, including a diverse set of agricultural techniques (drainage, irrigation, swidden cultivation), and a wide range of cultigens, most of whose Taino names are known to us<sup>1</sup>, all of which suggests the availability of an ample labor force, especially for the maintenance of the large areas requiring drainage. This supports high demographic estimates of the population, which Rouse questions without offering support for his position (see Dreyfus 1980-81).

As Rouse correctly points out, the Taino were not great navigators on the open waters, due to the strong west-east and north-south currents of the Caribbean Sea which posed difficulties for their canoes. The currents also prevented the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles from making trips to Hispaniola, from which they would not have been able to return. This may account for the fact that the two sociocultural systems of the island chain developed separately even though the so-called Island Caribs ventured as far as Borinquén (Puerto Rico), located to the northwest of their territory. These island people, who called themselves *Kaliponam* (the origin of the name of today’s Garifuna in Belize) – and not “Carib” or “Kaliña” (p. 21) – were in continuous contact with the Orinoco basin and the coast of the Guianas, where the sea often carried their canoes. Their territory proper was the whole set of Windward Islands, which maintained intensive social interaction among themselves. Their political organization was based on warfare, the building of identity via cannibalism, and the differential and variable power of chiefs (dependent on feats of bravery in battle, and resulting in special privileges of polygyny, residence, and so forth), and it was embedded in a vast system of alliance, exchange, and ritual hostilities with numerous continental Amerindian groups.

The multi-lingual and multi-ethnic character of this polity led to the development of very particularized linguistic usages among the Kaliponam, where the men (warriors) used a vocabulary different from that of the women, which originated with the continental Kaliña.<sup>2</sup> This “double language” has long fascinated researchers. Rouse espouses a historical explanation, compatible with the oral tradition of the Kaliponam, according to which a group of Kaliña ancestry is said to have invaded the islands around the middle of the fifteenth century and mixed with the local Igneri.

If this hypothesis turned out to be correct, it would not account either for persistence of the diglossia or for its specialization by gender and function;



neither would it account for the existence of two other languages, a contact pidgin and the so-called chiefs' language. The history of the region's settlement and an invasion may have produced the coexistence of different lexicons (like the existence of synonyms in modern English that come from Latin and Saxon roots). The linguistic compartmentalization at work among the Kaliponam comes rather from what Arnold Van Gennep (1908) called special languages, which are "attached to specific social groups," whose special character hinges on *certain elements* of language (here, the lexicon alone), and which "reflect at once the double tendency of cohesion and differentiation within the collectivity." Among the Kaliponam, linguistic differences probably reflected the strong status differences between men and women (inferiors, often captives) and between able-bodied men and elders (who lost the prerogatives dependent on strength as warriors). It seems to me that for a complete historical anthropology, the study of the functioning of past *societies* needs to be joined to the study of their *cultures*.

#### NOTES

1. *Casabe* (p. 2) is not originally the name of the plant (manioc, called *yuca* in Taino), but rather the name of the dry cake made from it.
2. The Kaliña spoke a Cariban language that has no relationship with the Arawak of the Kaliponam.

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*Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Taino.* ANTONIO M. STEVENS-ARROYO. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. xiii + 282 pp. (Cloth n.p.)

LOUIS ALLAIRE  
Department of Anthropology  
The University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 2N2

Stevens-Arroyo's book claims to be an ambitious venture into unravelling the intricacies of Taino religion based on the few fragments of mythological narratives collected as early as 1493 in eastern Hispaniola by Friar Ramon Pane at the request of Columbus himself. Each of the book's chapters is devoted to different aspects of his analysis with special emphasis on structural analysis inspired by Claude Lévi-Strauss's "Marxist" orientations, and the added dimension of a Jungian psychological analysis despite the theoretically irreconcilable nature of these positions.

The novelty of the author's approach to Taino religion is proclaimed throughout the book, and to a degree this is justified; indeed, it does not derive as much from anthropology as one might have expected (and wished), but from comparative religion with a substantial dose of Christian theology. It is perhaps for this reason that the author's attempts at reconstructing the cultural and sociological infrastructure of his analysis (a task essentially anthropological) often remains disarmingly naive. Despite his claims to the contrary, much previous work on the Tainos (that is, pre-dating the mid-1980s) must have been totally ignored. His confusion throughout the book between the historical Tainos and their distant ancestors who first migrated to the islands possibly as much as 2000 years before (and known to archaeologists as the peoples of the Saladoid series) is simply unforgivable, even considering that they are recurrently referred to as "Amerinds" (a somewhat awkward expression usually reserved for the physical types among native Americans), and more, that they are assigned a single and common world view all across this immense period. Stevens-Arroyo also erroneously subscribes (as have, unfortunately, some others) to the startling view that the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles were merely a marginal yet related branch of the Tainos, instead of a separate ethnic group with strong continental affiliations, and he nowhere acknowledges the sub-Taino category used by anthropologists.

In another serious misrepresentation, he assigns Taino subsistence to a type qualified as "harvesting economy," naively borrowing that concept from studies of the early chiefdom societies of the North American south-

east (Adena, Hopewell) which may indeed qualify, but otherwise have nothing in common with the type of relatively intensive agriculture practiced by the Tainos. Incredibly, he even seems to remain uncertain as to whether the Tainos were still a semi-nomadic society at the time of contact. Finally, this build-up of erroneous assumptions and interpretations culminates in constant references to the Tainos having first been an interior-oriented people as reflected in their settlement pattern, that was only later to spread to coastal areas among the historic Tainos. Archaeologists have long shown precisely the opposite to be the case (not including the earlier Saladoid however), with the distinctive interior emphasis of late prehistoric settlement patterns.

In spite of this serious and somewhat surprising shortsightedness, Stevens-Arroyo's chapters on the mythological documents themselves are perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the closest to the author's realm of expertise. The comparative point of view that borrows from more complex religious systems leads him to look at Taino myths as "sacred texts" which obviously were never actually recorded in writing before European contacts. The invaluable yet vague efforts of the ill-prepared fifteenth-century friar, Ramon Pane, in transcribing mythological narratives and other observations on Taino religion, provide the fundamental basis for the author's analysis. The textual evidence is actually based on a critical edition in Spanish by José Juan Arrom, the Yale scholar of Latin American literature. Unfortunately, Arrom's interesting work was published in Mexico in the 1970s; it will probably never be seen or read by anyone north of the Rio Grande and it might have been interesting in the light of the book to go back to his efforts. That the mythological fragments recorded by Pane belong essentially to the wider body of Amazonian myths has long been established by other scholars and this is fully acknowledged by Stevens-Arroyo. His comparative perspective, however, is not satisfied with this more immediate association; we are served instead a plethora of comparative situations with most of the world's great religions and their sacred literature: the Greco-Roman certainly, the Rg Veda, the Judeo-Christian obviously, as well as the oriental, more philosophical religions with which Stevens-Arroyo (and this soon becomes a somewhat fastidious leitmotif in his book) finds special affinities in the religion practiced by the Tainos, to an extent that eventually culminates in a temptation to assign them a form of incipient monotheism. Comparisons with Aztec religion and mythology are also frequently cited. In this, the author acknowledges some sympathy with recent interpretations that seek to derive Taino religion and culture from direct Mesoamerican antecedents; yet despite his sympathies, the idea (which is preposterous) is not given the attention one might have expected in the analysis.

Beyond these broad comparative brush strokes, the book's undercurrent of structural analysis might appear more promising; yet the approach, despite much discussion of Lévi-Strauss's marxist inspired methods, remains, I fear, essentially superficial. Certainly to be a structuralist, one must come up with structures, something that Stevens-Arroyo overlooks with one very general exception. To be sure, the emphasis is put instead on a simpler level of structure, that of opposition and homologies. Indeed, much of his more inspired results are based on a demonstration of the principle of opposition beyond the apparent confusion of cemies, divinities that he convincingly likens to Catholic saints.

The Jungian chapter, in comparison, and the author's conviction that he finds "mandala symbols" in Taino myths, leave me unconvinced, but my background will not allow me an expert evaluation. Certainly a psychoanalysis of Taino practices as they relate to religious behavior may not be without interest, but in this book the intention too often merely leads to such abusive statements as "if it is true that Taino men are more feminine than Western European-American men, it is also true that Taina (sic) women are more masculine" (p. 214). One might at least have expected, in this context, to find some of the more obvious observations of Oviedo, for instance, on Taino sexual practices; they would have been welcome in this line of analysis.

A final chapter raises issues closer to the archaeologists' preoccupations – that of the identification of historically known cemies from among the art work in stone, ceramic, and shell left by the prehistoric Taino (and here Stevens-Arroyo has no choice but to limit himself to the late prehistoric Taino proper). Taino iconography offers limitless possibilities, most of which still remain unexplored. The pioneer work by Arrom again provides the foundation for the book's interpretations. Whether they are convincing or not will depend on further analysis. There are indeed interesting similarities between some carvings and the descriptions and attributes of historical cemies. Yet the analysis offered by the author, like that of Arrom, certainly does not do justice to the hundreds of art objects, from the distinctive trigonoliths to simple bone pendants that must be representative of Taino deities. Some of the best known specimens already described and illustrated come from various areas of the Greater Antilles and more often than not their chronological position is simply not known. It has been a current mistake to attribute all Taino art to the same inspiration as that described by the chroniclers for the late fifteenth century. Iconographic analyses will have to be based on more rigorous methods from the perspectives of iconography, art history, and anthropology than is the case in this book.

Whereas it certainly will no longer be possible to discuss Taino religion

and mythology without references to Stevens-Arroyo's book, the genuine and definitive anthropological and iconographical study remains to be done. To the specialist the book may offer a source of many useful insights; to the reader at large it promises absolute confusion.

*The People Who Discovered Columbus: The Prehistory of the Bahamas.*  
WILLIAM F. KEEGAN. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992. xx + 279 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

IRVING ROUSE  
Department of Anthropology  
Yale University  
New Haven CT 06520, U.S.A.

The Bahamas were the last part of the West Indies to be settled by humans and are the last to be systematically studied by anthropologists. The author of this book summarizes his research on the settlers and on their treatment by the Spaniards. With its publication, Bahamian prehistory may be said to have come of age.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the nature of the settlers in Columbus's time. They called themselves Lucayans and belonged to the Taino ethnic group, which occupied the heart of the West Indies. The Tainos were flanked by two other groups: the Guanahatabeys in western Cuba, who appear to be survivors of the original peopling of the islands ca. 4000 B.C., and the Island-Caribs in the southern half of the Lesser Antilles, who by their own account arrived from South America shortly before the time of Columbus. Keegan recounts the progress of the ancestors of Tainos as they, too, moved up from South America, beginning in the middle of the first millennium B.C. and reaching the Bahamas about 600 A.D. He limits himself to cultural evidence, ignoring the research of his fellow anthropologists on the linguistic and biological ancestries of the groups (Granberry 1991; Rouse 1992:37-45).

This omission reflects his orientation. Human behavior is determined by two sets of factors – a group's need to adapt to the conditions of its natural environment and the effects of its cultural, linguistic, and biological heritages. Keegan focuses on the processes of adaptation, which are primarily cultural.

A key process resulting from differences in heritage is contact between ethnic groups. Keegan overlooks this process twice in his first chapter. On

pp. 11-12 he states that the Saladoid peoples, from whom the Lucayans are descended, discovered Grenada upon entering the Antilles, when in fact they must have learned about it from their Ortoiroid predecessors; and on pp. 17-18 he calls the Dominican-Republic sequence of Musíepedro, Atajadizo, and Guayabal cultures a single development, when in fact the first of the three was separated from the other two by a frontier between different series of peoples. Musíepedro, also known as El Caimito, was a Casimiroid culture on the far side of the frontier, while Atajadizo and Guayabal were Ostionoid cultures that had developed from Saladoid on the near side (Rouse 1992: Figs. 10, 14).

Keegan does not have to concern himself with ethnic conflict when he turns to the prehistory of the Bahamas in Chapters 2-7. The first Lucayans entered virgin territory and, so far as is known, were the only prehistoric people to live there. Hence the Bahamas, like Polynesia, provide an ideal laboratory situation in which to study adaptation within a single natural and ethnic environment.

He takes full advantage of this situation. In Chapter 2 he reconstructs the pristine environment of the Bahamas, stressing its differences from present conditions; in Chapter 3 he traces the movement of the Lucayans into that environment; and in Chapters 4-7 he draws conclusions about the changes that took place in their settlement pattern, social structure, subsistence, and demography respectively.

Reviewing the conflicting hypotheses about the routes of entry into the Bahamas, he concludes that the migrants moved from northern Haiti to Great Inagua and Aklin Islands and then branched, first turning northwest into the main part of the archipelago and later expanding southeast into the Turks and Caicos Islands, which had previously been frequented only by salt- and food-gathering expeditions from northern Haiti.

He bases these conclusions on archaeological surveys he has conducted along the presumed migration routes in search of data about the topics discussed in Chapters 4-7. By analyzing the data quantitatively in terms of rate-of-change formulas developed through cross-cultural study, he is able to show that the entry into the Bahamas took place about 600 A.D.

He focuses on sites; indeed, he does not illustrate any prehistoric specimens from the Bahamas. Other archaeologists have dug intensively in search of assemblages of artifacts from which to draw conclusions about the peopling of the archipelago. Deep in the Three Dog site on San Salvador Island, Berman and Gnivecki (1993) have encountered Ostionan Ostionoid potsherds resembling an assemblage from the eastern tip of Cuba, and have obtained radiocarbon dates beginning at 660 A.D. These findings independently confirm Keegan's date, but indicate that the entry took place from the

Windward Passage area between Cuba and Haiti, not from the heart of the present country of Haiti as he supposes (Rouse 1992:101).

The final two chapters cover the historic period. Here, he does full justice to the problem of ethnic contact between the Spaniards and Lucayans. Re-interpreting our main source, Columbus's diary, in terms of its transcribers' tendency to confuse miles with leagues and utilizing the results of his site surveys, he concludes that the first landfall took place on San Salvador Island and is able to identify many of the Lucayan villages encountered by Columbus.

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*Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763*. PHILIP P. BOUCHER. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. xii + 217 pp. (Cloth US\$ 32.95)

NEIL L. WHITEHEAD  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison WI 53706-1393, U.S.A.

This volume, partly based on research in the French and English archives, offers a narrative of interactions between the Europeans and the so-called "Island Caribs" from 1492 to 1763. There is a great need for such basic historiography of the native Caribbean, and the reference to such archival materials would lead readers to anticipate a significant improvement over other standard narratives of the European occupation of the region. In practice the archival materials refer only to the period from 1623 and even this rather limited historiographical project is marred by an erratic and inconsistent interpretation of existing anthropological scholarship on the native peoples of the Antilles. Such shortcomings might be considered less

pressing if it were not for the fact that the central justification offered by the author for this particular volume is that previous historical and anthropological works were deficient because of their "perpetuation of long-held stereotypes of 'Caribs'" (p. 1). Accurate though this observation is, it is no small irony then that the author's unfamiliarity with the archaeological and ethnological data that inform current discussion of the anthropology of the Caraïbes (or *karipuna*), as well as the lack of even a minimal engagement with the critical Spanish material of the preceding century, makes this text a good example of the very phenomenon of ethnic stereotyping that it denounces.

For example, the Caraïbes of the sixteenth century are characterized as "Stone Age people" (p. 17), and emerging political divisions among the Dominican Caraïbes at the end of the seventeenth century are glossed as "the predictable result of an alcohol-driven skirmish" (p. 101). Similarly, the idea of the imminent "disappearance" of the Caraïbes and their "decomposing culture" (p. 118), offered here as a narrative device to foreclose discussion of the Caraïbes after 1763, is actually a recurrent theme of European writings over the last five hundred years, despite the Caraïbes' obdurate survival (see Hulme & Whitehead 1992). Moreover the wholly fallacious assumption, highlighted in the title to Chapter 4, that it was "as if no such people existed" after 1763 ignores, among other things, the extensive documentation of the late eighteenth century concerning the war on St. Vincent and the tragic deportation of the Black Caraïbes to Central America. In the same way, the lack of serious research on the sixteenth-century sources prevents the author from making any assessment of the substantial changes that had taken place in the culture and societies of the native Caribbean before the physical colonization by the French and English of the Lesser Antilles in the seventeenth century. As a result, the author's attempts to interpret French missionary thinking are insensitive to the cultural and political variation among the Caraïbes of the different islands, while significant differences in the ethnographic representation of the Caraïbes by the Jesuits and Dominicans are not discussed at all. Such difficulties are also reflected in the basic narrative of European-Caraïbe relations that the author produces, as it is principally concerned with the context and consequence of European decision, while the Caraïbes themselves remain rather shadowy figures, supposedly due to a "lack" of evidence in the European archives (pp. 40, 42). In practice, however, it appears to be the author's own lack of familiarity with the ethnological or ethnographic issues concerning the Caraïbes which hinders his ability to interpret the seventeenth-century administrative texts, in themselves only a small part of the overall documentation on the native Antilles.



To the author's credit, he does perceive the necessity to move beyond the mere construction of narrative, important though that activity may initially be, and to consider the use of representations of the Caraïbes in European imagination. But this is hardly a novel project and only tends to reveal his own ethnological priorities, as in the curious discussion of the "realism" of Defoe's imagination of the character Friday (p. 126). Undoubtedly a greater familiarity with ethnological texts will improve the reading of such works, but their lack of ethnological accuracy is really beside the point. It should be emphasized that, because of the heavy ideological load the category of "Carib" carries, it is particularly incumbent upon contemporary commentators to avoid the recycling of colonial tropes. The evaluation of this volume has been correspondingly harsh, but the author's own use of those tropes, as in the title of the volume itself, suggests that such criticism is not misplaced.

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*Kaliña, des amérindiens à Paris: Photographies du prince Roland*. Présentées par GÉRARD COLLOMB. Paris: Créaphis, 1992. 119 pp. (Paper n.p.)

PETER KLOOS

Department of Cultural Anthropology/ Sociology of Development  
Vrije Universiteit  
1081 HV Amsterdam, the Netherlands

One of the most disgraceful expressions of colonialism was the late nineteenth-century habit of exhibiting colonized people at the great European colonial exhibitions. The plight of being exhibited befell Amerindians from the Guianas (Suriname, French Guiana) in 1882 (Paris), 1883 (Amsterdam), and 1892 (Paris again). Apart from being gaped at by the visitors, they were also being photographed, by Roland Bonaparte. In this well-produced book, a number of these photographs have been republished, together with information about the various exhibitions and commentary, including comments by Amerindian descendants of the participants, some of whom never returned to Guiana.

The book is a concomitant of an exhibition in Paris of the photographs, commemorating, I suppose, the historical journey of Columbus. But the

exhibition also went to French Guiana, where it was seen by Amerindians themselves, in the very setting from which the people came to Europe: the lower Maroni River.

The photographs of the book are preceded by a number of brief texts by Collomb, placing the colonial exhibitions in their historical context, and a preface by Félix Tiouka on behalf of the Caribs. The collection of beautifully reproduced photographs could easily have repeated the nineteenth-century dishonoring of the Caribs, but the text succeeds in preventing that: as it stands, the book urges us to look at ourselves. The sad faces of the Amerindians should remind us of a sad chapter in our own history. The photograph that strikes me most is of a group of more than thirty men, women, and children: the upper part of the body bare, the lower part covered with brand-new cloth, undoubtedly provided for the occasion. For me this photograph somehow epitomizes European hypocrisy.

*The African-Caribbean Connection: Historical and Cultural Perspectives.* ALAN GREGOR COBLEY & ALVIN THOMPSON (eds.). Bridgetown, Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1990. viii + 171 pp. (Cloth n.p.)

MAUREEN WARNER-LEWIS  
Department of English  
University of the West Indies  
Kingston, Jamaica

This eight-essay collection originates in a public lecture series co-sponsored in 1990 by Barbadian history and cultural institutions. It addresses a topic for which the Caribbean has great information hunger, but too few research and publication structures to pursue it.

Alvin Thompson's "Aspects of the Impact of the Slave Trade between Western Africa and the Caribbean" provides an overview of the debates about the two regions' reciprocal relationships in demography, economy, foodcrops, and militarization. These controversial issues will be further fueled by John Thornton's positions (1992). Richard Goodridge's "The African Background of the Barbadian Population" advocates "more rigorous, multi-disciplinary research" (p. 47), however ethnic proportions of Barbadian slaves are not examined, and the implied relationship between Niger Delta and Bajan cultures is not concretized.

Alan Cobley offers a descriptive survey of "Migration and Remigration

between the Caribbean and Africa," from the Barbadian presence among Sierra Leone's initial settlers to broader trans-Atlantic missionary, administrative, military, maritime, and labor links. His assertion (p. 65) that most of the nineteenth-century contract laborers to the West Indies out of Sierra Leone eventually returned needs supporting evidence, however, since the reverse appears to be the case.

Tony Martin's "The Caribbean and Pan-Africanism" presents data on personnel and ideological links within Pan-African movements. Outside the context of prehistory, though, one wonders about the diaspora extending to Australia (p. 71).

Richard Allsopp surveys several levels of speech culture – kinesics, pragmatics, tone, idioms, grammar, phonology, and lexicon – which demonstrate "African Linguistic Survivals in the Caribbean." His comparison of idioms is diffuse, however, and on p. 157 he neglects to provide African equivalents of phrases which are intended to illustrate the African-Caribbean link.

Although Allsopp's piece is not theoretical, his identification of an "idiom-generating world-view" (p. 159) does touch on the debate over continuity vs. creativity in the conceptualization of Caribbean culture addressed by Mintz and Price (1992). By the notion of "generating," Allsopp suggests that Caribbean peoples are active, not passive, receptors of ancestral cultural practices. Indeed, to my mind, continuity and creativity are in dialectical relationship, creativity being exercised both in respect of ancestral heritage and in respect of new physical and social culture contacts.

Culture theory is more overt in the contributions by Elaine Fido ("Africa and the Caribbean – The Literary Case") and Mervyn Alleyne ("African Roots of Caribbean Culture"). Fido makes the important points that "African culture is not one entity, even on the continent," but that "in the so-called New World, their interaction with one another forged new dimensions in African traditions" (p. 125). Alleyne makes a similar observation (p. 114). Indeed, the specifics of intra-African cultural loss and fusion are still to be addressed by scholars. Fido concludes her essay with indications of how African-Caribbean cultural forms have been mined by Anglophone Caribbean writers over the last three decades in the quest to allow "those ... anciently derived ways of approaching life ... to feed innovatively into contemporary life" (p. 137). Alleyne, for his part, points to artistic relationships between Africa and the Caribbean. However, in conceptualizing the transmission processes of African culture forms, he underestimates their periodic reinvigoration during the slave period, asserting that after leaving Africa, Africans "had no further contact with their home cultures" (p. 116). On the contrary, once there were new African arrivals, there were work and social opportunities for intercourse between Africans. This process contin-

ued in several places well into the nineteenth century, though in Barbados there was less reliance on new African imports to fill manpower needs (p. 118).

Alleyne also theorizes that a dominant ethnic group in the formative period of social engineering sets "the pattern to which other groups then and later would have to conform" (p. 114). This is a rather static notion. While not disregarding the impact of a strong "founder group," later groups do stamp a society's cultural configuration. The prominence of Yoruba-derived religions in the Caribbean and Brazil testifies to the influence of this relatively late arrival group.

Alleyne further credits the Twi-Asante as Jamaica's dominant African ethnicity. On further examination, however, his assertion relates to the Maroons, a minority, whereas the slaves formed the majority of the African populations. Indeed in the period 1655-1700, half the slaves were Akan (Twi-Asante) and Ga-Andangme (Ewe-Fon); 40 percent were from Angola (Patterson 1967:142). Over the entire slave trade period, the Bight of Biafra and Central Africa supplied 46 percent (Higman 1976:76). Later, the majority of about 8,000 African indentured laborers recruited during 1840-64 were Congo, Ibo, and Yoruba (Schuler 1980:68-69). The prominent ethno-cultural clusters for Jamaica thus emerge as the Akan/Ewe, Igbo/Efik, and Congo/Angola.

In Alleyne's contribution, the Mintz and Price reference is missing, as are the Thompson and Watson articles in Goodridge. Yet maps and careful proofing make for a readable text; I noticed only two spelling errors. By the data amassed, the overviews provided, and the theoretical issues sketched, this text illuminates subterranean areas of Caribbean culture and highlights the historical basis of a tenuous but persistent dimension in Caribbean international relations.

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*La couleur comme maléfice: une illustration créole de la généalogie des "Blancs" et des "Noirs".* JEAN-LUC BONNIOL. Paris: Albin Michel, 1992. 304 pp. (Paper FF 140.00)

H. HOETINK  
Department of Cultural Anthropology  
Utrecht University  
3508 TC Utrecht, the Netherlands

The first two-thirds of this complex and, in many respects, admirable book offers the reader an expertly guided *tour d'horizon* of contemporary theories on "race," identity, and ethnicity (Chapter I), and of the history of the larger French Caribbean islands whose "colonial racism" (very briefly compared to that of the United States, Brazil, and the rest of the Caribbean, but without an effort to explain their differences) is viewed as an entrenched "color" ideology both sustaining and sustained by a socioracial structure produced by a plantation economy based on "black" slavery (Chapters II, III, IV).

In the last third of the study, the author zooms in on the final destination of this voyage: two minuscule dependencies of Guadeloupe, each with between one and two thousand inhabitants. The author has two reasons for putting these islets in the limelight. First, there is a marked difference in stratification: Terre-de-Haut is said to have no internal social ranking, whereas La Désirade's "racial" segmentation shows affinity with the neighboring larger "sugar" islands. Second, it is precisely the very small demographic scale that enables the author (inspired by the work of Jean Benoist) to engage in the type of historical-genealogical research which tries to document along family lines the ongoing process of intermingling – be it by legal or extra-legal unions – between the "original" population groups. With the help of sufficient and reliable written or oral sources, the *social* effects of such genetic mixing may also be gauged, for as Bonniol clearly recognizes, increasing genetic and social mixing do not necessarily go together. Only a tiny part of individuals' genetic material – i.e. certain somatic traits – will provide the social markers which determine their allocation to a given socioracial group. Moreover, such social markers are by definition subject to change.

Bonniol deftly sketches both islands' social history and presents us with ingenious computations intended to establish the degree of admixture of each of the four generations since abolition (1848) while allowing for such uncertainties as the degree of mixture of the slaves liberated in 1848, the "racial" identity of newcomers, and the modern censuses' silence on "ra-

cial" composition. Interviews shed light on how some persons perceive themselves and their forebears "racially."

Until abolition, La Désirade's economy was based on *habitations de coton* which, though comparatively poor and small, made for the same groupings as in the larger plantation economies (*Grand Blancs, Petits Blancs, gens de couleur, Noirs*, free and enslaved). When, after abolition, cotton gave way to subsistence agriculture and fishing, the economic distinctions between these groupings virtually disappeared. Yet the old socio-racial structure – albeit with an increasing number of marriages across the color line – remained intact up to the 1960s when, according to the author, external democratizing impulses and political departmentalization led to its breakdown. Ultimately, he believes, the remaining "white" group will dissolve into the general population.

On the other hand, Terre-de-Haut's population descends from white *petits colons* and a slave minority. Their economy was based on subsistence farming. After 1848, the liberated slaves and their descendants were quickly and totally absorbed. Today, writes Bonniol, most families exhibit an internal somatic variety between "white" and "light colored," yet the islanders insist on calling themselves "white" and tend to look down on the outside (non-"white") world. (Would, this reviewer asks himself, a lesser reliance on the genetics of mixture and a greater emphasis on its social effects not force us to say that the islanders' definition of who is white [their somatic norm image] has widened [and "darkened"] somewhat, thereby including "marginal" individuals who would be excluded from such a definition by certain "white" outsiders, anthropologists among them?)

To explain this phenomenon, Bonniol emphasizes the absence of a racist ideology on Terre-de-Haut; since there was no plantation-like economy (as there was in La Désirade) such an ideology could not flourish. While plausible at first sight, one may wonder if such an explanation does not underestimate the sociological importance of numerical proportions. Whereas in La Désirade in 1848 there were 29 percent "Blancs," 52 percent "Noirs," and 17 percent "*indéterminés*," these percentages in Terre-de-Haut were 48, 7, and 45, respectively. This raises the question whether the "Noirs" in Terre-de-Haut were perhaps perceived as an "exotic group" whose tiny and non-menacing number by itself fostered absorption. By contrast, the island of Saba, strikingly similar in size and economic history, but with the two main groups each making up half of the population, did *not* evolve along Terre-de-Haut's path, maintaining (without ostensible friction) clear social and geographic lines of division.

So far I have paid attention mainly to Bonniol's own research on two small islands. I would now like to emphasize again the high quality of his

first several chapters. His critical review of the theories purporting to explain "racism" and his analysis of racism's genesis in the French Caribbean contain many vivid and at times brilliant passages and are an important contribution to the general literature on these subjects. In the historical material he presents, each reader will discover a different gem – e.g. Victor Schoelcher's pre-Tannenbaumian classification of slavery, with the Americans being more cruel than the French (p. 86); or the early notion that the *colons espagnols* generally accepted as "white" certain individuals of mixed descent whom the French did not (p. 80).

Perhaps Bonniol's preoccupation with genetics made him underestimate the social importance of the "colored" group. For him, there is only one "color line," that between white and non-white, even though he recognizes the social relevance of color within the non-white population. Somewhat similarly, a preoccupation with the French Caribbean informs much of his theorizing: the connections between colonialism, plantations, slavery, and racism are strongly underlined. Only passing references (in the introductory chapters) to anti-semitism hint at other structures in which "ethnic" or "racial" tensions may prosper. Not only domination but also competition engenders frictions, as the situation in Caribbean societies with large East Indian populations makes clear.

It is to be hoped that in the future Bonniol will dedicate his considerable talents also to such competitive structures. In so doing he will, I am sure, again enrich our understanding while at the same time putting his present findings in a wider perspective. It would be interesting to see whether such an effort would make him stand by the optimism that his study of two small islands has clearly inspired.

*Two Evenings in Saramaka.* RICHARD PRICE & SALLY PRICE. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991. xvi + 417 pp (Cloth US\$ 55.00, Paper US\$ 19.95)

MICHAEL ACETO  
Department of Linguistics  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Austin TX 78712, U.S.A.

For more than two decades, Richard Price and Sally Price, individually and together, have been documenting the culture and history of the Saramaka, descendants of slaves who escaped from plantations to form Maroon socie-

ties in the interior of Suriname during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his ambitious *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People*, Richard Price detailed the history of these Maroon clans by combining Saramaka oral texts with his own commentary and archival research in a split-page format. *Two Evenings in Saramaka* is less audacious than that book, but it too succeeds in broadening our knowledge of life among the Saramaka. This time, the Prices present the social events, particularly the telling of tales, that comprise burial rituals in these Afro-Surinamese communities.

The essence of the work is a transcript of fictional stories, or *kóntus*, told during two funeral wakes for three Saramaka deaths. Some background information is provided by the authors for these two nights of tale-telling – who died under what circumstances; ritual preparations for the burial; the burial day itself. Then the tales begin. The Saramaka say that they could tell these stories for four days without ever repeating one; if this is indeed the case, then we are fortunate to have a substantial number of these tales collected in one source.

This work stems from the Prices' earliest fieldwork in Suriname from 1966 to 1978 among the Upper River Saramaka; the process of transcription and translation from spoken Saramaccan on tape to English was begun in the 1980s. The rendering of these texts reveals a clear methodological choice: the Prices sought only to present what was audible and intelligible on their reels of tape. Garbled data were omitted despite the fact that the authors were often able to recall missing passages from their own memories of the events in question or from the insights of native speakers familiar with these funeral wakes who served as informants, in both the United States and French Guiana, during the transcription process. In an effort to avoid an "artificial, hypercorrected text," the authors have rendered a transcript/translation of the performance as captured on tape.

The text is an ethnographic work which is performance-centered. This reviewer laments the fact that it stops short of becoming a full ethnography of speaking since the Prices, perhaps better than anyone working today in anthropology or linguistics, would be able to offer cognizant analyses of the salient features and strategies of Saramaka ways of speaking.

These Saramaka tales are not solo performances, but rather group or community performances in which verbal exchanges are the norms. The Prices have fashioned a series of performances which reflect the moods of the participants on these two evenings, including not only the tales themselves but also songs, riddles, interjections, interruptions, responses, and disagreements. These performances resemble more a "jam session" than a "piano concerto." The text represents a community of voices by keeping



intact the give and take of the funeral wake. This quality most likely would have been lost if the authors had focused only on the narrative of the stories themselves. This book captures well the *performance* of these stories.

Many familiar Afro-American stories and characters – Anansi the spider and the West Indian Chiggerfoot Boy are but two – permeate these pages. But their Saramaka counterparts are often imbued with the social concerns born of a distinctive Maroon culture. That is, the Saramaka escaped from European plantations in Suriname and formed their own societies (from which emerged their own discrete language). These societies maintained their existence despite great pressure from colonial authorities who attempted to kill them or return them to slave plantations. The Saramaka are convinced that the days of war and slavery will come again and their tales reveal a sense of conflict and antagonism with coastal urban life as represented by those who speak Sranan, the unofficial creole lingua franca of Suriname. (Saramaka fears appear not to be unfounded since the civil war of the last decade has taken a terrible toll on these people as well as on other Maroon groups.)

*Two Evenings in Saramaka* is a valuable work for anyone interested in Afro-American culture, folklore, and even languages. (Musicologists may be interested to find musical transcriptions by Kenneth Bilby for more than 60 songs.) This work is explicitly written from a folklorist perspective yet creolists may also find the appendix of some considerable interest since one lively tale about the “discovery” of the *apinti* drum is reproduced in interlinear translation/transcription. In my view, one is too few of these splendid tales to provide with the original Saramaka transcription. This final tale was the most compelling since the reader is afforded a better sense of the structure of the language and how it represents certain expressions and concepts that Westerners may take for granted when viewed only through an English translation. More of these relatively scarce Saramaka texts transcribed in the original language would have broadened the appeal of this fascinating book to creolists and linguists as well as anthropologists.

In a footnote (p. 388), the authors state that the syntax of Saramaccan derives from an African progenitor and that approximately half of its lexicon derives from various African languages. This substratist characterization of the creole’s structure is not at all a settled issue though it is a popular position (see Bickerton 1984). However, the remarks about the Saramaka lexicon are not supported, to my knowledge, by any research on the subject. Richard Price first made this claim in *The Guiana Maroons* (1976:36), but it has yet to be systematically documented by any researcher. Saramaccan does contain a higher percentage of lexical items derived from African languages than other European-language-derived creoles, but by most ac-

counts this percentage is far less than 50 percent. Most analyses of the basic Saramaka lexicon confirm the following approximate figures: half of the Saramaka lexicon is English-derived; Portuguese-derived words comprise another substantial component (30-35 percent) (Aceto 1993); and the remaining 15-20 percent is divided among African and Dutch sources, with a majority of this component derived from the various African languages that were present within the creole's matrix – Gbe, Kikongo, and Twi. (The percentage of lexical items derived from African languages may rise in discourse associated with specific contexts, rituals, or verbal genres.) This question of African etymologies has important implications for anyone interested in creole languages and societies. But even if it is demonstrated (via discrete lexical items and not tokens in a particular discourse) that half of Saramaka's lexicon is African-language-derived, this characterization misses an important point: most of the "core" vocabulary – i.e., *man*, *woman*, *child*, *eye*, *hand*, etc. – is European in origin. The final word on this topic awaits the systematic compilation of a dictionary complete with etymologies (a relatively rare project in Creole studies).

These final remarks are perhaps less important in light of the book's goals. *Two Evenings in Saramaka* is yet another significant contribution by Richard Price and Sally Price to the field of Afro-American studies.

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*Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City.*  
VERNON W. BOGGS (ed.). New York: Greenwood, 1992. xvii + 387 pp.  
(Cloth US\$ 49.95)

JORGE PÉREZ ROLÓN  
Liberal Arts Department  
Interamerican University of Puerto Rico  
San Juan 00919, Puerto Rico

It is quite interesting to note that at the same time we in Puerto Rico are getting ready to start the first ever Popular Music Program at the college level in the history of our island (at the Interamerican University's Metropolitan Campus), our attention is called to the pioneering and excellent anthology put together by Vernon W. Boggs.

But we can hardly consider this phenomenon a mere coincidence. If musicology already had its heyday as far as documentation is concerned, it follows that ethnomusicology has developed significantly during the past decades. What all Latin Americans can be sure of is that it is our turn in history, time for our popular music to be documented, analyzed, and, of course, debated.

This anthology is a combination of traditional scholarly works, informal articles, and interviews with the music makers, observers, and organizers. After reading it you get the feeling that you have been taken on a long journey from the roots of Latin music up to the present time. Now we know with certainty that what is commercially called "salsa" can be traced back to the history of African slavery in the Caribbean, especially in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Due to the migration process to the United States during the 1920s, and especially during the 1950s, all these different but similar musical forms were re-done, integrated, and transformed (in a process that the great don Fernando Ortiz was to call "transculturation") to produce what we know today as "salsa."

Thanks to personal interviews, readers of *Salsiology* get to know important figures like Mario Bauzá, Frank "Machito" Grillo, "Tito" Puente, and "Tito" Rodríguez, as well as Ray Barreto, Andy and Jerry González, Willie Colón, Rubén Blades and the many other Latin American musicians who took the music forward in this transformation. The interaction between our traditional music and musicians and the popular music of other nationalities in New York City (especially jazz) is finally put down in writing. And that is the main contribution of this new anthology. The history of our music is finally being documented.

What the Quintero-Rivera and Juan Flores pieces about the Puerto

Rican *danza* and *plena* indicate is the direction future research should take. We must get away from the "ethnic" approach and concentrate our efforts on the analysis of the relationship between the music and the music "business." This will allow us to understand why today, after so many years of "salsa," we find Jerry Masucci on a perennial vacation touring the world, while the musicians who played for his Fania All-Star Company are still trying to earn a decent living playing the music they love and respect.

I am sure that the present anthology will start a healthy debate among scholars, students, and "*salseros*" for years to come. It should be included as a textbook in any popular music course. And yes, "salsa" will be with us for quite some time. If you are in doubt, just ask the members of "El Gran Combo," Gilberto Santarrosa, Eddie Santiago, Jerry Rivera, and Tony Vega, to mention but a few here in Puerto Rico. ¡*Salud!*

*Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration.* SHERRI GRASMUCK & PATRICIA R. PESSAR. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. xviii + 247 pp. (Paper US\$ 14.95)

MARTIN F. MURPHY

Department of Anthropology & Kellogg Institute for International Studies  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame IN 46556, U.S.A.

*Between Two Islands* represents a significant contribution to the study of Dominican migration to the United States and to labor migration studies in general. All previous studies of Dominican migration, regardless of their inherent worth, pale in comparison to the scope of this project, which is the most complete analysis of the causes and consequences of this migratory phenomenon.

Grasmuck, a sociologist, and Pessar, a sociocultural anthropologist, bring two individual studies together in the form of one integrated and coherent whole. The comfortable manner in which the analysis and prose move from macro to micro level data and from the island of Hispaniola to the island of Manhattan is evidence of their success.

Like many Dominican migrants who attempt to combine the best of both worlds (Dominican and North-American), the authors do the same with two principal research methods. They present the reader with extensive quantitative data collected through their field investigations or gleaned from other reports and publications and juxtapose it with the results of

qualitative research. This strategy allows the authors to comprehend and interpret more fully the quantitative data because they have spent thousands of hours with the people whose behaviors are represented in those same statistics. Similarly, this approach permits them to place their subjects' opinions and observations within the larger context.

The work effectively accomplishes its stated goal: "to illustrate the multi-dimensional nature of international labor migration ... on four levels of analysis: (1) the international division of labor; (2) domestic state policy of the sending society; (3) social class relations in both the sending and receiving communities; and (4) gender, generations, households, and migrant social networks." (p. 199). By critically analyzing many of the major works in the area of the international division of labor, the authors demonstrate the merits of this approach, and also note the often sterile and overstated positions of many works that go by this name. They also demonstrate the important role that the sending society's state may play in the international migration process; and they show that in the Dominican case, the effects of government policies on migration are indirect but powerful. Finally, their data and analyses clearly document the types of Dominicans who are migrating (middle sector) and their class aspirations (middle class).

The most exciting theoretical discussion in the work is related to households. The authors are on the mark when they recognize what many social scientists have not been able to appreciate in the past: that households are not homogeneous units, with all members on equal footing and with the same goals and interests. Household members' goals and interests are conditioned by many factors, of which gender and age are the most important. Women and men see the migration process and its desired results in very different ways because of their gender roles in the larger society and because of their differential access to power within the household.

Unfortunately, this work falls short in a few other important respects. The data, although interesting, are now very dated. The fieldwork in the Dominican Republic was performed in 1980 and 1981 and the New York fieldwork from 1981 to 1983. Both the Dominican Republic and New York City are much different places for Dominicans in the late 1980s and early 1990s. And for the New York City demographic data the authors rely exclusively on the 1980 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, although updated estimates are readily available for at least the late 1980s. Although *Between Two Islands* represents an important analysis of Dominican migration to New York City in the late 1970s and the first years of the 1980s, the applicability of its conclusions to the present is a question for yet another study.

Although the New York City fieldwork data are interesting, they should be viewed with a cautious eye. Because of methodological limitations (the

use of non-probability sampling, and the sample's size and construction by strata) this section is the weakest part of the study.

Even with its limitations, Grasmuck and Pessar's work has brought together many of the loose threads in the story of Dominican migration to New York, and will be a standard.

Now the time has arrived to study another "result" of Dominican migration to the United States: Dominican-American youth who have up to now been forgotten in the studies. For scholarly and policy purposes we must know who they are, who they think they are, and where they fit in U.S. economic, political, and social systems. This large, emerging group of adults – citizens, workers, and voters – must be understood and appreciated in their context and on their own terms.

*Distant Neighbors in the Caribbean: The Dominican Republic and Jamaica in Comparative Perspective.* RICHARD S. HILLMAN & THOMAS D'AGOSTINO. New York: Praeger, 1992. xviii + 199 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

ROSARIO ESPINAL  
Department of Sociology  
Temple University  
Philadelphia PA 19122, U.S.A.

Intra-regional comparisons have always been on the agenda of Caribbeanists. *Distant Neighbors* fits well in that tradition, but takes as its focus two countries that had never before been compared systematically: the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

The objectives of the book emerge from a set of criticisms raised by the authors about the field of comparative politics, Caribbean studies, and the literature on developing countries in general. While placing the book in the context of research on Latin America, the authors complain that comparative studies in the region lack cohesiveness and conceptual unity. They seem to endorse the notion (although this is not entirely clear) that comparative politics needs more theoretical integration. Thus, the authors opt for an eclectic approach that, while promising, never gets to be clearly specified.

A main argument of the book is that the differences separating the Dominican Republic and Jamaica have obscured important similarities between them which should be examined and highlighted, such as the centrality of personalism and clientelism in the political process. The book also seeks to enhance knowledge of the Caribbean region as a whole by compar-

ing and contrasting two countries with different heritage: Spanish and English. Specifically, the book seeks to bridge the gap in the academic literature resulting from the separation of English-speaking countries from Spanish-speaking ones. It is this gap, the authors claim, that has prevented the development of comparative studies in the Caribbean. At the broadest level, the book seeks to provide understanding into the problems faced by developing nations undergoing transition toward modernity, particularly with reference to Latin America.

A major thesis of the book is that in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica divergent systems have resulted in comparable socioeconomic and political situations. Major differences include: Jamaica's British parliamentary system fostered during a period of tutelary democracy, compared to the Hispanic authoritarian tradition of the Dominican Republic; the trade union influence in the formation of political parties in Jamaica and the lack of it in the Dominican Republic; and the predominance of Protestantism in Jamaica and Catholicism in the Dominican Republic. The similarities, in turn, can be seen historically, in the geopolitical and sociocultural context, in their common economic experiences, and in the accommodation patterns. More specifically, similarities are evident in the colonial legacies, primarily of the plantation system, in the economic, political, and military influence of foreign countries, and in the evolution of modern statehood.

The analytical framework is divided into three major substantive areas: political culture, political institutions and processes, and political influences and outcomes. In the analysis of political culture, common patterns of political leadership (personalism) and clientelism in what appear to be divergent systems are highlighted. The political institutions and processes the book discusses include the constitutional system, the executive and the legislative, and the bureaucracy. An assessment of the parliamentary versus the presidential system is also presented. The analysis of political influences and outcomes includes references to the labor movement, business organizations, and other pressure groups.

The book provides a general overview of the development of Dominican and Jamaican society, from the arrival of Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century to the analysis of the most current events up to 1990. For the sake of comprehensiveness, the book fails to provide a more in-depth account of social processes and institutions around which the discussion of differences and similarities could have been organized. This is particularly evident in Chapters 6 and 7, where interest groups and economic policies are briefly described but not analyzed. One might suggest that choosing specific issues for comparison rather than broad topics such as political culture of institutions would have perhaps allowed for sharper comparisons.

What comes to mind here is an assessment of the successes and failures of social democracy in fostering development – under Manley in Jamaica and under the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) in the Dominican Republic. In other words, an issue-oriented approach rather than a historical and institutional approach could have helped to better highlight the differences and similarities between the two countries. In addition, while personalism and clientelism are identified as characteristics common to the politics of both societies, it is not clear what exactly accounts for that, given the differences in the structure of political institutions and the processes of political development.

Overall, the book represents an important contribution to the comparative study of Caribbean societies. It is rich in information, clearly written, and well organized. As the only available systematic comparison of the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, it is required reading for researchers interested in the development of Caribbean societies from a comparative perspective and the study of the socioeconomic and political challenges faced by underdeveloped societies.

*Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.* NEVILLE A. T. HALL, edited by B.W. Higman. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1992. xxiv + 287 pp. (Paper J\$ 350.00, US\$ 16.00)

SVEND E. HOLSOE  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Delaware  
Newark DE 19716, U.S.A.

At one time the empire of Denmark stretched from the eastern shores of India to the West Indies, including settlements on the Gold Coast, along with Greenland, Iceland, the Fair Islands, Norway, southern Sweden and the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Today, this political entity is very much diminished, with only Denmark itself along with the Fair Islands and Greenland remaining. However, one area about which Danes remain nostalgic is their former Danish West Indies, as indicated by the annual exchange visits which occur between Denmark and the now U.S. Virgin Islands.

However, as Hall points out in this book, Danes' sovereignty over their West Indian islands was weak at best. Certainly the majority of the European settlers on these islands were Dutch, English, Scotch, and Irish, with



only a very small political and military establishment which was Danish. The latter had only a limited impact on the society, as exemplified by the fact that Dutch and a Dutch creole were the initial languages for most of the inhabitants on St. Thomas and St. John, while English and English Creole dominated on St. Croix and eventually overwhelmed St. Thomas and St. John. The Danish language was only used for official business, and public documents were often translated into either Dutch or English.

This linguistic and cultural phenomenon means that in order to examine the slave society of these islands, one has to turn to non-Danish parallels. Since the most successful sugar economy was established on St. Croix, it is this island that receives the bulk of Hall's attention, and it is certainly this island's society which should be seen in relation to other British sugar economies in the West Indies.

Hall's book is divided into twelve chapters which provide a detailed overview of slavery and the social system based on it. Hall analyzes the system in the light of what he calls Denmark's "Empire without Dominion," and then describes Danish views of Africans, slaves, and slavery. This is followed by an analysis of the various legal codes which were drafted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all of which reinforced the institution of slavery and the social distance between free whites and slave blacks, as well as attempting to compartmentalize what was perceived as the intermediate group, freed blacks.

These early chapters set the stage for the rest of the book. Hall analyzes the nature of slavery on the plantations, where the majority of the slaves resided. He attempts to understand the social structure and social setting, as individuals moved throughout their everyday lives. Another chapter focuses specifically on the independent activities that slaves engaged in, which allowed them to create niches in some ways separate from the overarching white dominated economic activities, which were intrinsic to plantation sugar economy. The world of independent activities by slaves was the world where, to quote Hall from another context, they could create a "cultural marronage" and escape from the dominant institutions. For those who could not tolerate the strictures of the dominant institution, Hall examines in another chapter modes of escape, and looks in particular at maritime maroons.

Attention is also given to "an intermediate sort of class," namely the freedmen population. The growth and nature of this community is discovered along with the legal and social contexts in which they had to live. In particular, Hall examines the freedman petition of 1816 as a means of analyzing the nature of this particular community, using the petition as a reflection of how the community saw itself in relation to the dominant white

community, and how the freedmen were viewed and treated in turn by the white community.

The book ends with an examination of the attempts to ameliorate the conditions of slaves, particularly in the light of the emancipation movement which was developing on the surrounding West Indian islands. Hall focuses on the establishment of a school system to educate the children of slaves, as one step toward the Danish king's final recognition in 1847 that emancipation would eventually have to occur, though with a twelve-year intermediate period leading up to it.

The slaves chose not to wait, and within a year they massed in Frederiksted and demanded their immediate freedom. But as Hall indicates poignantly in his last chapter, "The Victor Vanquished," it was an empty victory, for the former slaves were immediately enmeshed in a labor contract system that bound them to individual estates by annual contracts, and they could only move to another estate if they were able to find employment. They were trapped on the estates, as there was no land available for the ex-slaves to establish their own livelihood as peasant farmers.

Hall's book represents a fine body of scholarship that will serve as the standard by which all future research on the slave society in the Danish West Indies will have to be measured. He was able to master not only the obstacles of a foreign language and written script, but also the labyrinthian complexity of the major archival collections, in many cases poorly catalogued and in any case divided among at least five different collections scattered among institutions as far flung as Copenhagen, Washington, Berkeley, Charlotte Amalie, and Christiansted. This book stands as a tribute to Hall's tenacity, determination, and skills.

The publication of this work was brought about because of a relationship of respect, friendship, and affection. Neville Hall was killed in a car accident in 1986, and Barry Higman, at the request of Hall's wife, Mysser, was asked to bring his work to publication. Higman has done a masterful job of weaving together a coherent and logical text based on published articles and unpublished manuscripts. Although this is Neville Hall's book, Barry Higman richly deserves praise for having brought it to fruition.

*The Journal of Don Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis 1780-1783.* FRANCISCO MORALES PADRÓN (ed.). Translated by Aileen Moore Topping. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989. xxxvii + 380 pp. (Cloth US \$39.95)

LIGHT TOWNSEND CUMMINS  
History Department  
Austin College  
Sherman TX 75091-1177, U.S.A.

Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis served as a special representative of Spanish King Charles III to Cuba during the American Revolution. The King sent him to the region during the 1780s to oversee and expedite military preparations against nearby British possessions, especially Pensacola. Saavedra was instructed to cooperate with regional Spanish army and navy commanders in coordinating policy, work with treasury officials to insure proper government funding for the anticipated military expeditions, and insure that Spanish war goals were met. He arrived at Havana in January 1780 after a long voyage which took him from Spain to Cuba by way of British Jamaica. He was successful in carrying out his instructions and remained in the Captaincy General of Cuba for almost two years, departing for Spain in April 1782. By inclination Saavedra was a figure of the eighteenth-century enlightenment, and he was part of a circle composed of Campomanes, Floridablanca, and Feijoo. He posed for a portrait by Goya and, consistent with such intellectual orientation, kept copious personal journals throughout much of his lifetime. In their entirety, the various journals span almost fifty years and constitute remarkable historical sources for historians concerned with late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Spain. The topics range from his American Revolutionary mission of the 1780s, through his activities with the Guadalquivir River Company, to a medical journal covering 1805-12, his presidency of the *Sociedad Patriótica* in 1817-18, and his notations on the charitable institutions of Seville.

The journal of his activities in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean during the early 1780s is of particular interest to historians of those areas, and to scholars concerned with Spanish participation in the American Revolution. It begins with an entry made on June 25, 1780 as Saavedra prepared to leave the court at Aranjuez for Cuba; it ends with a notation executed on February 15, 1783 upon his return to Spain. Saavedra's remarkably peripatetic travels took him not only to Jamaica, but across much of Cuba and to various islands in the Caribbean – all of which he described in great detail. This was especially true for Jamaica, where he was taken on the way to Cuba when a British corsair captured his Spanish packetship. Typical of that more

genteel era, the British commander at Kingston accorded Saavedra all the privileges of the port even though Spain was at war with Great Britain. The Spaniard, perhaps not unlike a modern tourist, made extensive explorations and recorded most of his observations in the journal. He commented on Jamaica's history, described its structures of government, and provided detailed observations on its agriculture, the state of military preparedness, trade and commerce, and industrial development. Saavedra eventually arrived in Havana where he participated in the numerous *juntas* that planned the 1781 Spanish siege of Pensacola. The entries during these months are invaluable to the historian for understanding the subtle interplay between the intrepid General Bernardo de Gálvez, Captain General Diego Navarro, and the naval commander Juan Bonet. Saavedra accompanied Spanish forces to Pensacola during the spring of 1781 and provided an eye-witness account of the fighting which chronicled Bernardo de Gálvez's grand victory over the British. Saavedra's account of the siege of Pensacola, one of the most detailed sections of his journal, constitutes one of the most historically important observations in it. During the remainder of his mission in the region, Saavedra also met with other important figures and recorded his observations of them, including Francisco Miranda, José Solano, Juan Manuel de Cagigal, and the French admirals the Comte de Grasse and the Comte d'Estaing.

Saavedra's American Revolutionary journal has long been known to specialists, but prior to the publication of this volume it has been all but inaccessible to general readers, especially those who do not read Spanish. The esteemed Spanish historian Francisco Morales Padrón edited and annotated the journal into a version which should be read by anyone interested in the history of Cuba, Jamaica, the Gulf of Mexico, or the Caribbean during the era of the American Revolution. His annotations provide useful explanations and elucidations for historical events, persons, and geographic localities not completely defined or described in Saavedra's various entries. The late Aileen Moore Topping, who had a long career as an experienced researcher in Spanish archives, fashioned a very readable and literary English translation of the Morales Padrón transcription. She also provided additional annotations to define persons and places which might not be familiar to the non-Spanish reader. All in all, this is a most welcome volume to the growing literature on Spanish participation in the American Revolution. The University Presses of Florida should be commended for publishing such a high quality and potentially useful edition of the Saavedra journal.

*Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas.* LAIRD W. BERGAD. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. xxi + 425 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

FRANCISCO A. SCARANO  
Department of History  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison WI 53706-1483, U.S.A.

In this study of Matanzas's economy from the early moments of its plantation sector in the early 1800s to the end of the Spanish-Cuban-American War, Bergad tries to correct one of the glaring inadequacies of Manuel Moreno Fraginals's now classic *El ingenio* (1978): its general lack of specificity about the economic history of Cuban sugar. Bergad contributes a fine-grained, fully documented history of sugar monoculture in the nuclear area of Cuba's nineteenth-century sugar-and-slavery complex. Superseding by far, in its comprehensiveness and attention to detail, any other economic history of Cuba in this period, the book will become the standard work by which to test hypotheses about the plantation sector, including crucial questions about the economic performance of estates and the demographic context of slave life. The research is impressive, the result of painstaking work in local, provincial, and national archives in Cuba and Spain. Fortunately, Bergad presents much of the pertinent data in some fifty graphs, ten maps, and close to eighty tables. For scholars wishing to delve even deeper into particular aspects of Matanzas's economy and society, the notes at the end of the book provide invaluable suggestions and ample critique of source materials.

*Cuban Rural Society* is organized chronologically into four parts, each covering a discrete period of the Matanzas sugar story in the nineteenth century. Part I discusses the initial "invasion" of sugar and coffee into the Province before the building of railroads (1800-37). Part II takes up the rapid extension of slave-produced sugar, based on the double pillars of a massive clandestine slave trade and a pioneering railroad development (1837-78). Part III is concerned with the transformation of sugar production in an age of labor reorganization (1878-95), while Part IV focuses on the provincial industry's collapse during the Second War of Independence and the beginnings of its reconstitution in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion and the end of the Spanish sovereignty (1895-98). The middle portions (parts II and III), comprising twelve of the nineteen chapters, form the core of the book. They include extensive discussions of land tenure and use, slave demography and prices, the identity of planters and merchants, and when-

ever possible, the institutional history of individual estates. Elaborate tables and graphs drawn from previously untapped archival sources help steer and articulate many of these discussions.

Bergad's main theses should surprise few of those who have followed with interest the historiographical debates surrounding *El ingenio*. The Matanzas example, he argues, shows how successive groups of entrepreneurs from outside the Province, beginning with aristocratic old Havana families, invested heavily in land, slaves, and machinery, built highly productive plantations, often on virgin soil, and extracted huge profits. These new Matanzas sugar barons displaced a relatively sparse population of original settlers. Beginning in the 1830s, however, newcomers, many of them of immigrant origin, supplanted the original planter group. Those newly arrived, who included some of the names most closely associated with large-scale sugar production in late nineteenth-century Cuba (Poey, Baró, Diago, and Zulueta, among others), introduced an "innovative dynamic element" into the operation of the sugar complex. They were intimately tied to the slave trade, a business upon which the expansive sugar complex was predicated. Moreover, they participated in railroad construction, which essentially "telescoped" the various stages of occupation of new soils and their integration into the circuits of sugar production and trade.

The book also fleshes out and gives analytical specificity to two other arguments of *El ingenio*: That merchants progressively took over the sugar business and that technological adaptation at the top of the plantation hierarchy occurred swiftly and thoroughly. In the 1850s, Bergad argues, the links between sugar property and merchant capital shifted. Whereas a meaningful distinction between planters and merchants had generally been maintained through mid-century, the depression of 1857 changed all that. Joint-stock companies, typically controlled by interlocking directories of merchants, took over many of the largest sugar plantations. Most of these were the estates that Moreno has described as *gran manufactura*, the largest and technologically most progressive of sugarmills in Cuba and perhaps in the entire cane-growing world. By 1860 these estates had adopted up-to-date processing apparatus: more powerful grinding mills, for example, and Derosne and Rillieux vacuum evaporators to speed up the refinement process and improve the crystals' quality. They thus reaped the financial benefits of improved juice-extraction rates and greater yields of better-quality sugars. The vast majority of mills in 1860 (87 percent in Matanzas province), however, had not incorporated the new processing technologies and continued to rely on the old open-air Jamaica trains to clarify and condense the juice.

The book adds nuance to arguments by Moreno Fragonals and Rebecca

Scott (1985) on a critical set of interpretive issues. It substantiates and refines Scott's assessment that slavery in the central producing zones of Cuba did not collapse strictly from internal economic contradictions, as Moreno Fraginals had claimed. An analysis of the interaction between slave and sugar prices and slave productivity supports the claim that in the late 1860s and early 1870s a recently purchased slave could generate enough income to pay for himself in a very short period; Bergad estimates a mere 2.2 years. Furthermore, Bergad agrees with Scott against Moreno Fraginals that, more than any other single factor, the Ten Years' War corroded the Cuban slave system and propitiated its decline. The War "raised the political stakes of maintaining slave labor in Cuba: so long as slavery persisted, a substantial sector of Cuban society served as potential raw recruits for the rebels" (p. 188). But the price/productivity analysis shows that it was only after 1873, when sugar prices declined sharply – and, presumably, under the shadow of Puerto Rican abolition – that demand for slaves softened in Matanzas. The erosion of plantation slavery was therefore due to a combination of internal and external factors, some clearly political and ideological, some more evidently economic. Slave resistance, and their progressive leverage with the masters, was among the most important.

In raising, upon a close examination of Matanzas, the issue of shifting labor arrangements in the 1870s, Bergad is able to demonstrate that the planters' frantic efforts to replace the declining slave population did not meet with success. Their inability to swiftly shift to free labor prompted a reorganization of the industry. Its most visible signals were the separation of cane growing from processing and the ruin of the old planter class. But as these changes unfolded, there were other effects, particularly on the remaining slaves themselves. Bergad shows once again that from the start of the sugar revolution to about 1870, living conditions had deteriorated for the majority of slaves, as planters curbed their access to provision grounds and reduced other perogatives. The proportion of Matanzas slaves who lived on plantations had grown steadily (a pattern which continued into the 1870s); thus, the dreaded estate regimen became even more closely identified with the condition of slavery. But Bergad also documents an important shift during the War, particularly after the promulgation of the Moret Law of 1870, which freed all slaves born after 1868 or older than sixty. As wage labor spread in Matanzas in the late 1860s and 1870s, slaves increased their demands for cash compensation. In the face of such militant demand for wages, and for fear of rebellion and further loss of productivity, planters adopted incentives rather than engaging in repression. At the same time, they tried to take advantage of the slaves' increasing liquidity by setting up plantation stores to sell them needed goods. "In this way," Bergad argues,

"more modern forms of exploitation paralleled the deepening abolition process and the growing assertiveness of slave dotaciones" (p. 237). This penetrating assessment of the economic changes which undergirded abolition, and the relationship that they bore to both the Ten Years' War and the slaves' own liberating actions, constitutes, in the reviewer's opinion, *Cuban Rural Society's* greatest contribution to our understanding of Cuban slavery.

The book's chief weakness lies in the treatment of the individual and social dimensions of slavery. Although the term "social history" is in the subtitle, Bergad pays almost no attention to the standard fare of the social historian: gender, family, the circumstances of daily life, the contentious creation of community and its fractured existence, and many others. The study of demographic measures is the only salient social history theme that the author considers systematically. The slaves' motivations and actions are not so much documented as they are assumed from the observation of statistics and other formal indices of social life. Even planters, merchants, and their families, about whom the documents speak loudly, fail to come alive in Bergad's writing. Socio-economic structures are the book's protagonists, and historical change occurs through them.

Another flaw is the author's unwillingness to compare the Cuban material to those of analogous countries. The book is unabashedly Cuba-centered. Bergad does not engage the rich country-specific and comparative literatures on slavery and abolition. The singularities of the Matanzas and Cuban cases could have been highlighted better, and the commonalities drawn out more clearly, with equal benefit both to those historians who work on Cuba and those who study other slave plantation societies.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, Bergad's study of Matanzas sugar is decidedly a welcome addition to the literature on nineteenth-century Cuba. It will help place discussions about slavery and abolition in one of the Americas' most intriguing slave societies on a much firmer footing than has been possible so far. In so doing, it will allow for comparisons with other Caribbean and New World slave plantations regimens – though the book itself does not draw them. And it will help historians refine questions about Cuban society that until recently we could only crudely identify, because the economic and demographic history of the plantation complex was still clouded in generalizations. Bergad's work is, in this sense, pathbreaking.



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*Class, Politics, and Sugar in Colonial Cuba*. ANTON L. ALLAHAR. Lewiston NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990. xi + 217 pp. (Cloth US\$ 89.95)

ROBERT L. PAQUETTE  
Department of History  
Hamilton College  
Clinton NY 13323, U.S.A.

These two volumes, ostensibly related, differ markedly in focus, method, and quality. Jensen's short monograph details the origin and development of Cuba's periodical press, from the founding in 1790 of the *Papel Periódico de la Habana*, Cuba's first significant gazette, to the failure in 1839 of *El Plantel*, the mouthpiece of the remarkable circle of proto-nationalist intellectuals centered in Domingo Del Monte. For three moments – in 1811-14, 1820-23, and 1836 – Cuba scented a free press, only to have it snuffed out by the metropolitan government. The influence of Catholic censors, strong in the beginning, faded over time; secular forces came to dominate the struggle over what Cubans should read and write. Successive Spanish regimes had to confront the deep and abiding tensions inherent in a colony whose burgeoning plantation economy depended on consumer demand in a trans-Atlantic world that was undergoing democratic revolution and generating the world's first antislavery crusade. Cuban whites struggled to reconcile their liberal and nationalist aspirations with their colonial status and their addiction to imported African slaves. Indeed, Cuba's rapid elaboration into a slave society raised the specter of race war and the island's Africanization. Out of adversity came creativity. The irregular flowering of Cuban literature during this period cannot be explained apart from the colonial strictures that closed off other channels of expression. Yet, as Jensen points out, "For most of the period under study, creoles countenanced Spain's restric-

tive press policies; they sacrificed expressive freedom at the altar of sugar profits and social stability" (p. ix).

Jensen tells his story chronologically, in five principal chapters. The first covers the period 1790-1810, during which the *Papel Periódico*, cautious and vulnerable, grew from a weekly to a daily publication, largely under the control of Havana's enterprising sugar planters and their elite allies who comprised Cuba's leading economic club, the *Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País*. From time to time the clergy fought – and lost – small battles over the control of content. But the class position of the members themselves insured that the gazette's pages would be filled with useful business and commercial information, not French political and philosophic fashion. The *Papel Periódico* and the few similar publications that sprouted up in the early 1800s never had more than a few hundred subscribers, even though Cuban literacy rates of little more than ten percent of the adult population proved high by the standards in Latin America at the time. For Jensen, self-imposed content restrictions by Cuba's intellectual elite best explain the few subscribers. Although Havana's Economic Society triumphed over the Catholic Church to control press censorship, Society members confined secularization of the press to safe and colorless subjects in accord with their own religiously-informed vision of ordered progress.

In Chapter 2, Jensen recounts Cuba's first experience with a free press, born of the desperate peninsular counterattack against Napoleon's invasion. Cuban printing presses showed some life. Havana and the Economic Society lost its press monopoly. Pamphlets and single-sheet printings (*anónimos*) multiplied along with the periodical press. Political debates became more visible in print. But the Cuban press hardly threw caution to the wind. It received a hard and probably unneeded lesson in 1812 during the second year of press freedom, when an island-wide revolutionary conspiracy of people of color was uncovered. Led by a free black craftsman named Aponte, the conspiracy was to some degree stimulated by press reports about metropolitan politics. When Ferdinand VII rolled back press freedom in 1814 after his restoration to the Spanish throne, the Economic Society recovered its monopoly, and "Freedom of the press ended with scarcely a whisper of public protest" (p. 49).

Decibel levels increased and rifts within Cuba's white elite widened during the *trienio*, the three-year period of press freedom brought about in 1820 by the constitutionalist *pronunciamiento* against Ferdinand. New and livelier periodicals emerged to debate the organs of the sugar oligarchy on what constitutionalism would mean for Cuba. For the most part, the opposition press, the so-called *piñeristas*, wanted to qualify peninsular power in Cuba by implementing measured political reform within the empire. As white

"outs" wanting in, they explicitly denounced any revolutionary course. Jensen contends that on the subjects of independence and annexation, "little evidence of serious discussion" existed (p. 61). Yet how much of the political debate in the periodical press, encased as it often was in personal attacks on powerful individuals, reached other social groups, and in what form to what end, requires further consideration. The conspiracy of Aponte, the pro-independence masonic conspiracies of the 1820s, which embraced a curious cast of characters of different statuses and colors, and the timing, content, and location of the great Cuban slave revolt of 1825 raise interesting possibilities about the kinds of discussions that were occurring outside of established forums. Indeed, as Jensen admits, concern that press freedom was somehow unsettling "the lower classes, the 'population of color,' and the troops stationed on the island" (p. 72) contributed to the government's decision to crack down on the *piñeristas*.

In 1823 the arrival of a new captain-general with extraordinary powers to prevent revolutionary contagion from spreading to Cuba from the Spanish American mainland followed by the restoration of Ferdinand to autocratic rule in Spain ended the *trienio*. Cuba would soon acquire the reputation of the "ever-faithful isle." Successive captains-general placed Cuba's press on a tight leash. Peninsular condescension intensified. Many of Cuba's most gifted young intellectuals who had matured during the *trienio* despaired of their "child-like" condition and their beloved country's departure from constitutionalism. Some formed a dissident faction within the Economic Society; others refreshed themselves abroad or wrote from exile; many encoded their unhappiness in literature. Under the guidance of Domingo Del Monte and José Antonio Saco, the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* emerged in the early 1830s as one of the most cosmopolitan and original literary periodicals in the Spanish-speaking world. Yet its premature death in 1834 proved symptomatic of the generalized affliction. The *Revista's* thinly-veiled forays into politics, including criticism of slavery and the slave trade, offended Captain-General Tacón; Saco was exiled; the *Revista* had to cease publication. When the third round of press freedom came to Cuba in 1836 as a result of a short-lived constitutionalist revolt in eastern Cuba led by the regime's liberal military governor, it remained confined to that region, beyond the enjoyment of the Havana-area intellectuals. "By 1840," Jensen concludes, "the Cuban Parnassus was in a shambles ... Cuban literati were dispersed, disheartened, and so diverted by the pressures of earning a livelihood that literature had receded to the status of a neglected avocation" (pp. 135-36).

Jensen based his excellent study on a careful and extensive reading of documents in Spanish archives. No better analysis of colonial Cuba's peri-

odical press exists. Regrettably, he did not have access to the documents in Cuba that could have broadened his focus to include the impact of the periodical press on a wider range of social groups. He might also have engaged in a more explicit way the precise role of slavery in conditioning the dismal fate of Cuba's periodical press and what Jensen calls the problem of readership. Slavery, as Del Monte and his circle clearly understood, decisively prepared Cubans to accept their colonial servility. It also formed the basic building block of an economic system that, however much it contributed to Cuba's rapid economic growth, underdeveloped its human capital in ways that kept literacy and subscription rates low and made a literary career virtually impossible.

Anton Allahar's attempt to make sense of Cuba's slaveholding sugar planters might have illuminated that larger economic system. I'm sorry to say, however, that his book should not have been published. He concedes that his "exercise in historical sociology" offers no new empirical research and that any claims to originality must rest on his interpretation of published sources. Fair enough. But Allahar's book, published in 1990, ignores every important study of colonial Cuba, in English and in Spanish, published since 1978. His research appears to have stopped with the publication of Manuel Moreno Fraginal's multivolume classic *El ingenio*. As a result, Allahar relies on outdated quantitative data, repeats big and small mistakes corrected by the recent scholarship, and fails to engage evidence and argument that challenge his generalizations. Even in his use of pre-1978 published sources, his eagerness to look at Cuba's sugar planters through a crude marxist lens leads to questionable reading of texts and dubious selectivity of evidence. Allahar also says, Moreno Fraginals and other historians notwithstanding, that no one before him has attempted "to discuss the sugar planters in a detailed way" (n.p.). Yet his putatively fresh interpretation of Cuba's sugar planters recapitulates much of *El ingenio*, including the mechanical notion of a contradiction between slavery and technological advancement in the sugarmill that impelled Cuban abolition.

To his credit, Allahar asks good questions. How did Cuba's sugar-planting class evolve? Of what elements was it composed? How did it respond to specific political and economic stimuli? How did slavery affect the long- and short-term thinking of the sugar planters and Cuba's economic development as a whole? Allahar is surely right to see Cuba's sugar planters as essentially aggressive and rational businessmen vulnerable to larger political and economic forces they could not control. But he seriously errs in concluding that declining sugar prices and rising slave prices in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century amounted to declining plantation profitability. Indeed, as Rebecca Scott, David Eltis, and Laird Bergad

have recently demonstrated, technological advancement and the continued use of slave labor were not necessarily incompatible. In Cuba, slave labor remained a profitable investment at the moment of abolition. Improvements in total factor productivity offset the rise in slave prices. The mystery of why Cuban sugar planters clung to an "uneconomical" institution turns out to be no mystery at all. Thus, Allahar's assertions about the decline of Cuba's sugar industry, the deadly impact on sugar cultivation of the Ten Year's War, the debilitating competition of European beet sugar, and the growing inefficiency of slave labor require substantial qualification, if not outright rejection.

*U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s.* JOSEF OPATRŇY. Prague: Charles University, 1990. 271 pp. (Paper n.p.)

ALINE HELG  
Department of History  
University of Texas  
Austin TX 78712-1163, U.S.A.

The purpose of this study is to explore "the real place of annexationism in Cuban society, especially in the 1850s." It aims to correct Cuban historiography, which has considered the movement for the annexation of Cuba to the United States only as a political and "ahistorical" phenomenon (p. 7).

OpatrŇy undertakes an analysis of Cuban annexationism not only in its Cuban context, but in the wider context of U.S. expansionism in the mid-nineteenth century. On the one hand he focuses on the views and actions of elite Cuban annexationists and reformists. On the other, he analyzes extensively U.S. expansion in Texas and Central America and U.S.-Mexican conflicts and tensions, as well as the ideology of Manifest Destiny.

OpatrŇy's thesis is that viewed from this broader perspective, Cuban annexationism was not an "erroneous" movement going against Cuban interests, but a movement produced by its historical context. Some Cuban intellectuals and other members of the Cuban elite were dissatisfied with Spanish colonialism and worried by Cuba's pursuit of the tortuous path taken by recently liberated Spanish American territories. To these men, the United States, in contrast to Spain and Latin America, offered an image of economic success and (white) democracy that was very attractive. Contemporaneously, many North Americans, especially in the U.S. South, were interested in annexing Cuba. Thus, according to the author, Cuban annexationism was a movement that reflected the interests of both sides.

tionism was "natural" in the context of the time, but it seduced only some members of the Cuban elite and had little impact on the general Cuban public.

In addition, Opatrný thinks that Cuban annexationists should not be faulted for their position, because it laid the groundwork for the Cuban independence movement. They envisioned separation from Spain, a fundamental step toward the idea of independence. They were ready to take up arms to achieve their goal, and thus anticipated the independence struggle of the 1860s. Their expeditions provoked repression by Spain, which increased tensions between the Creole population and the Spanish authorities, and thus contributed to turning Cubans against Spain. And finally, they participated in the debate on *cubanidad*, or the distinctiveness of Cubans, a debate that eventually led to the formulation of the concept of the Cuban nation. Opatrný's thesis is thus ambitious. His study, however, is not without problems.

First, the author is openly deterministic in his approach to history. To make of "the annexationist movement ... one of the stages on the road, which led Cuban society to national emancipation" (p. 253) not only shows a certain positivism, but is an oversimplification of history. Cuban annexationism did not only exist in the 1850s; it continued to have supporters in the separatist movement from the 1860s to the 1890s, as well as at the beginning of the republic. Moreover, even in the present, Cuban annexationism and its avatars have not disappeared altogether. And, of course, U.S. expansionism, though modified, has continued to inform many U.S. policies.

Second, Opatrný ascribes only minor importance to the role played by race and ethnicity in the debate over annexationism and *cubanidad*. The fact that *cubanidad* as envisioned by the white Cuban elite he studies included neither the large slave population nor the numerous free population of color does not discourage the author, who asserts that these intellectuals were precursors of Cuban nationalism. In reality, Cuban society in its complexity is little present in the study, which focuses mostly on a few elite annexationists or reformists. Although the author is probably right when he writes that annexationism had no broad popular support in Cuba, he does not substantiate this claim.

Third, although several manuscript collections are listed in the bibliography, most of Opatrný's evidence comes from secondary sources and published documents. More important, recent revisionist studies are briefly discussed in the introduction, but they are not considered in the rest of the book. This is particularly the case for Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood* (1988) and Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba* (1985) whose contributions to the study of slavery and annexationism are ignored.

Finally, Opatríy's study, which seems not to have been carefully edited, has problems of language and style. Numerous sentences are awkward, incomplete, or unclear. This makes the reading sometimes laborious.

Although Opatríy's attempt to take the heat out of the debate over Cuban annexationism and to situate annexationism in the context of its time is certainly praiseworthy, his own bias toward presenting annexationism as a "natural" stage in Cuban nationalist struggle prevents him from grasping the issue in its full complexity.

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RITA GIACALONE  
Graduate Program of Political Science  
Universidad de los Andes  
Mérida, Venezuela

This bibliography has successfully combined the extensive search for published material on military matters in the Caribbean region, undertaken by Humberto García Muñiz while conducting research for his own publications, with the expertise of Betsaida Vélez Natal, Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Bibliotecología y Ciencia de la Información of the University of Puerto Rico. Together they have produced a very useful guide to understand the military phenomenon within the insular Caribbean, especially in the years after World War II. From the beginning the authors make clear that they have not included border disputes, military interventions by the United States, the process that resulted in the Cuban Revolution, or the Missile Crisis of 1962, due to the fact that each of these would merit its own bibliographical recopilation. Even with these exceptions the book manages to present more than 1,000 entries about a field of study that is not usually perceived as having been widely treated in the region.

The bibliography is divided by geographical areas according to the language spoken in each of them, and these areas are subdivided by countries. Further subdivisions within each country section are the military forces, the paramilitary forces, the police, and foreign military presence, classified in books, articles, magazines, thesis and dissertations, and public documents. Two indexes at the end of the book help the readers locate bibliographical material by author and by subject-country (for example, Police-Puerto Rico, or Military-Barbados). Titles in French and Dutch are accompanied by their translation into Spanish.

It is, however, hard to understand why at least the works listed under "Caribe General" (167 entries) and "Caribe Anglparlante" (50 entries) were not given a more detailed thematic treatment and subdivided in terms of civil-military relations, historical studies, institutional development, or any others. This way the authors could have helped identify not only the linguistic areas or countries less studied from the point of view of military institutions, but also those subjects that have received less attention from the academic community. This is especially unfortunate due to the fact that the "Presentation" of the bibliography begins with a quotation from Eric Williams's "A Bibliography of Caribbean History" (1954), in which this distinguished historian and former prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago complains that international policy had fragmented the geography of the Caribbean, had destroyed the essential unity of its history, and had linguistically segregated analysts studying this region. I feel that a step in the direction of undoing those negative effects of international policy would be to start classifying bibliographical material about the military phenomenon, or anything else, in the Caribbean in such a way as to allow interested readers to cut across linguistic and/or national divisions. Regarding the division according to type of publication (book, article, etc.), perhaps a code initial in brackets at the end of each reference included would have been enough, leaving more space for thematic treatment.

All this said, however, the publication is certainly of interest to anybody concerned either with military matters in developing nations in general or with contemporary events in the insular nations of the Caribbean. The bibliography has the potential to fulfill its dual purpose of attracting new researchers to this still understudied field and of allowing those already engaged in it to make a timely balance between what has been done so far and what remains to be achieved.



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*Trade Issues in the Caribbean*. IRMA TIRADO DE ALONSO (ed.). Philadelphia: Gordon & Breach, 1992. xv + 231 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.00)

CARLOS E. SANTIAGO  
Department of Economics  
State University of New York  
Albany NY 12222, U.S.A.

*Trade Issues in the Caribbean* consists of ten essays, two of which (Chapters 3 and 8) have been published previously. The volume examines trade relations between economies in the Caribbean Basin and their major trading partners, generally the United States, as well as trade among Caribbean countries. The work is descriptive in nature and highlights institutional features of inter-and intra-Caribbean trade, such as that associated with the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA).

Five of the ten chapters are authored by Tirado de Alonso and they provide a useful bridge for examining the current structure of Caribbean trade as well as a format for discussing salient issues. Of most relevance is her discussion of the structure of trade in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and islands of the English-speaking Caribbean. The recommendations from utilizing international trade as a source of growth are not different from what is currently in vogue in Latin America in general – continued export promotion, expansion of non-traditional exports, access to markets, and the creation of linkages with countries in close proximity to expand economic integration. The author is uncertain about how some of these efforts might be undertaken under the present institutional framework or why they failed in the past.

Thoumi's essay, "Trade Flows and Economic Integration among the LDCs of the Caribbean Basin," utilizes a gravity equation to examine the volume and structure of intra-Caribbean Basin trade. The findings are not entirely unexpected, but unfortunately the exercise is outdated inasmuch as the empirical results end with 1979. The economic changes in the region have been too dramatic for one to rely fully on these results, although one might suspect that the parameters did not change significantly.

Castañer and Ruiz provide evidence for an often discussed, but generally undocumented, notion that Puerto Rico's economic integration in the Caribbean is minimal. The work is based on an input-output framework and suggests the value of this approach to studying intra-Caribbean trade. A crucial finding is that the structure of trade between Puerto Rico and its Caribbean Basin neighbors is concentrated in more labor-intensive activities. Thus, the employment implications of increased trade with the Caribbean is important for Puerto Rico, particularly since trade between the island and the United States is based on a more capital-intensive structure. This finding can serve as a basis for increased participation of Puerto Rico in Caribbean development, particularly since the employment generating capacity of industries likely to benefit from this relation is relatively high.

The three remaining essays, Schoepfle and Pérez-López's "Export-oriented Assembly Operations in the Caribbean," Thoumi's "Economic Policy, Free Zones and Export Assembly Manufacturing in the Dominican Republic," and Pelzman and Schoepfle's "Special US-Caribbean Economic Relations," provide an informative listing of relevant institutional features of Caribbean trade and trade relations. Again, the strength of these chapters lies in their description of the institutional setup upon which Caribbean trade rests; their basic weakness is the lack of an analytical focus or attempts to link theory with practice.

Although the volume largely accomplishes its goal of examining trade relations, it does not enter into a discussion of the "analytics" of trade for small open economies, and the reader is left without a substantive framework upon which to evaluate the gains or losses associated with bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. What it does suggest is that the divergence between theory and practice is indeed significant in the arena of international trade. Clearly, theoretical innovations in this area would benefit from a broader knowledge of the institutional mechanisms of intra- and inter-Caribbean trade. Likewise, only from a coherent theoretical posture can we derive general propositions to guide trade policy.

Scholars who are well versed in the institutional features of Caribbean trade will find little that is new here. The real beneficiaries are those individuals with limited exposure to Caribbean trade patterns and institutional trading arrangements. Thus, the volume could be used as a background text in courses on Caribbean economic development. The one caveat is that the institutional features of international trade have a tendency to change dramatically in a short period of time, thus outdating material very quickly. The potential for hemispheric integration leads one to wonder whether current structures will quickly become obsolete.

*Haiti: Guide to the Periodical Literature in English, 1800-1990.* FRANTZ PRATT (ed.). Westport CT: Greenwood, 1991. xiv + 313 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

DREXEL G. WOODSON  
Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology and  
The African American Studies Program  
University of Arizona  
Tucson AZ 85721, U.S.A.

We conventionally think of bibliography as a perfunctory form appended to serious texts, a librarian's job, or an especially meticulous humanist's or scientist's hobby. Unfortunately, the "we" voicing such reductionist ideas includes not only graduate students just finding their feet in, say, anthropology, history, or comparative literature, but also seasoned professionals with long records of study within and across disciplines. Private scholar Frantz Pratt's guide broadcasts to students of the Americas a conception of bibliography – writings about texts that inscribe and disseminate knowledge about sociocultural objects of shifting value – as a critical tool in basic and applied research.

For Lambros Comitas, who wrote the book's Foreword and is no stranger to bibliography's challenges and rewards, Pratt's "yeoman service" offers "a new ... window on Haiti ... [and] a most unique opportunity for viewing and judging our own observations of the Haitian reality" (p. ix). Good intentions deserve such praise because as I remarked a decade ago (1983), bibliographic illiteracy plagues Haitian studies. For general readers and too many specialists, a stereotype of Haiti (black, poor, and politically corrupt or inept – story done) closes off avenues of inquiry. Although the "Black Republic," the "Magic Island," or "Voodoo land" has fired the imaginations of English-language writers for nearly two centuries, Pratt shows, periodical writing about Haiti has remained alarmingly shallow and narrow.

Pratt's four-year project compiled just over 5,000 citations (perhaps ten of them duplications) from some 40 periodical indexes and 1,200 magazines. Chronologically arranged entries are grouped into nine fairly standard subject categories (The Physical Setting, The Cultural Environment, The Historical Background, etc.), six of them divided into rather uninspired topical subcategories (Flora, Voodoo, Decline [1825-1915], etc.). Closely typeset author and magazine indexes counter a disappointed expectation that primary entries be alphabetized by author, but not the need for thematically cross-referenced secondary entries.

The guide has its share of mechanical errors: typos; missing publication information or punctuation; incorrect or incomplete journal names

(VIII-4461) and article titles (III-K-1771); misordered entries (V-H-2920); and erroneous authorial attributions (III-K-1756) or misspelled author's names (VIII-4468). It also exhibits jarring categorization oddities. How did an essay on historiography (VIII-4461) find its way into the "Bibliographies" chapter? Why list a work about the *Société Congo*, a *Vódou* secret society on Haiti's La Gonâve Island (III-K-1740), or Haitian anthropologist Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain's obituary (III-K-1780) in Chapter III's "Society" subsection? While these flaws are minor, other shortcomings are not.

Pratt touts computerized data collection and manipulation, ignoring Laguerre's demonstration of that methodology's limitations (Woodson 1983). Perhaps that explains entry format inconsistencies, such as book reviews listed sometimes by book authors, sometimes by review authors. Similarly, "unevenness" best characterizes the coverage of English-language articles in foreign-language journals, and of foreign-language articles in English-language journals. Computerized reference services are only as reliable as their databases, which are often incomplete or inaccurate. *The International Dissertation Abstracts*, for example, led Pratt to important doctoral theses about Haiti. However, he neglected at least five anthropology or history dissertations submitted to North American or European universities in the 1970s and 1980s, suggesting that many English-language theses from around the world may have escaped his computerized search. Had he added information about the dissertations to *Abstracts* references, we would learn more about the international academic infrastructure for Haitian studies. Only hands-on bibliography, Pratt reminds us, ensures comprehensive coverage, as well as accurate, complete, and informative entries.

Periodical literature increased and diversified from 1800 to 1990, appearing in publications for scientific or humanistic audiences (including highly specialized readerships) and those for the general public. It is strange, therefore, that nineteenth-century U.S. newspapers are so poorly represented. Strange, too, that *The Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, a British abolitionist journal whose articles during the 1820s and 1830s explored the consequences of Haitian "emancipation," was overlooked. Stranger still, only one of Joan Dayan's fine essays in literary criticism from the 1980s (III-B-1304) is listed, an oversight that raises questions about coverage of works by authors in other fields.

Perhaps such "eye-passes" result from the myopia of "Bibliographies," the guide's briefest chapter (pp. 235-37, formatted with large blank spaces). Since it includes works in French, several major omissions are puzzling. Pratt ignores the catalogs of two significant Haitian private collections

(Lowenthal & Woodson 1973, 1974). Failure to include among the many reviews of Laguerre's *Haitiana* Sidney Mintz's 1982 criticism of its organization and pretentiousness leaves doubt that *Review/Revista Interamericana* was fully mined for hemispheric perspectives on Haiti. My own review's absence might be excused if it did not disclose the omission of *NWIG*, which has taken notice of Haiti more regularly during the last decade. L.-F. Hoffmann's ([1987?]) meticulous list of Jean Price-Mars's writings would interest users. And, Pratt should have guided those concerned with controversial foreign-sponsored "development" to "fugitive" reports from the 1960-80 period (Zuvekas 1977; PNUD 1982).

Privileging English-language sources over French or Haitian Creole ones has become fashionable (cf. Lawless 1990, omitted perhaps because of its publication date). That maneuver valorizes *potentially* fertile outsiders' understandings of people and things Haitian, but devalues *certainly* seminal insiders' understandings. Pratt's preface (p. xi) and dedication to Max Bis-sainthe, role-model for Haiti's bibliographers, emphasize that bibliography is a continuing process. Its substance and form are, I would add, equally important. Bibliography should not only update entries in existing categories, but also correct or contextualize entry data and recast categories, so as to tap and compare diverse, multilayered funds of knowledge. Pratt has taken a step, however halting, toward that goal.

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*Hangen boven de oceaan: het gewone overleven van Creoolse jongeren in Paramaribo.* LIVIO SANSONE. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1992. 58 pp. (Paper NLG 24.50)

GARY BRANA-SHUTE  
The Foreign Service Institute  
Arlington VA 22209, U.S.A.

If read with clinical academic repose this well written little book will reward the student with snappy ethnographic vignettes of young male social life in Suriname. Sansone, a cultural anthropologist from the University of Amsterdam, completed a dissertation on survival strategies, subculture, and ethnicity among young Creoles in Amsterdam. His research required him to undertake "sending society" research in two poorer neighborhoods in Paramaribo. The first half of the book consists of thumbnail profiles of several Jacks and Jills; their likes, wants, dreams, living arrangements, and work or, as turns out to be the thesis of the book, their "hustle." The second is devoted to remarking on the themes that emerge from the previous snapshots: legal and illegal hustles and their relationship to work (as it is conventionally defined); women and hustling; the dream of emigration to the Netherlands; the relationships of men and women; and the almost seamless cultural orientation toward the Netherlands. A simple three-page ending states the conceptual model and genesis of the title. Young, poor Creoles live a life of limbo – hanging over the ocean – until they migrate to the metropole and indulge their weak and easily damaged egos in the cornucopia of Dutch wealth. They are involved in a world system of consumerism with the high end anchored firmly in Amsterdam and the low end tied to down home, impoverished, politically unstable Suriname. They reside in an international culture that reinforces needs, strategies, and perceptions for Creoles on both sides of the Atlantic.

But the disturbing part of the book is twofold: the vacant, superficial lives led by young people and the impact of Dutch riches on the structure of inequities in Suriname.

Years ago when I lived in such a neighborhood in Paramaribo, young people expressed their desires to *libi fri* ("be free") which turned out to be a gloss for not having a no-count job where one worked long and regular hours, for a boss, for low pay, in a position which would muss one's hair or

dirty one's fingernails. Sansone brings this up to date with excellent descriptions of own-account hustling such as reselling market goods in the local neighborhood, changing foreign currency on the black market, and part-time taxi driving – the most desirable form of own-account hustling because you can “ride around in a car, it is not hard work, you can talk with your friends, meet interesting people, and mount other simultaneous hustles” (p. 33). The sale of marijuana from ambulatory salesmen and an increasing retail trade of cocaine are attracting interest as, for the women, is professional prostitution and “keeping company” of visiting Surinamers from the Netherlands. International hustles that have to stay up to date are assisted by telefax machines.

But what does all of this mean? Suriname is damaged goods; the crummy ambiguities of colonialism have been compounded by more than a decade of phony revolution, extreme political and economic corruption, a virtual exodus to the Netherlands, and a loss of faith in anything Surinamese. There is nothing to be gained by work; you're only a chump, say the young, if you buy into that bill of goods. Costume, clothing, style, creams to straighten the hair, *eaux de toilette*, and razor sharp creases on one's pants are the thing, and the cool jack who can score the goods is the light footed and cunning prince of the streets. Crafts – carpentry, plumbing, etc. – pay nothing and are scorned by the young. So, one argues, in this case the hustle makes economic sense. But the adaptation cuts deeper. Family members at home in Suriname who work as teachers, nurses, craftsmen and such are priced out of the market when one remittance in Dutch guilders from overseas (cashed on the black market) can put their annual salary to shame. Money begged from overseas subsidizes religious feasts, purchases necessities and luxuries, and inflates prices beyond legitimate acquisition, and Holland exerts a magnetic pull on the young. The phony replaces the real. Young women would rather “keep company” with a guilder-laden Surinamer from Holland than with a local school teacher – “If a man wants to go out with me he better come up with Sf5-600 a month, hear” (p. 35); teenagers refuse to walk to school because it is beneath them and hustle money to rent a taxi.

The book is not a community study; Sansone spent time with only thirty-seven young people between the ages of 17 and 33. But the book is convincingly written, with a light, wry touch. There is nothing excessive about the book – the conceptual model, the tone, the vocabulary. It is harmonious to read, but for me it was a sad read. Yet, my nostalgia and sanctimony get in the way of my anthropological thinking. Perhaps the transformations occurring in Suriname are the blunt, fundamental, and final outcomes of colonialism. I really hope they are not; what is going on in this little book is hardly nation building.

Thus, the end pay-off of the hustle is to emigrate, get out, and get to consumer heaven where real money can presumably be hustled. In the meantime, one waits things out, hustling much, investing little, and "hanging over the ocean."

*Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire.* DOLF HUIJGERS & LUCKY EZECHIELS. Amsterdam: Persimmons Management. 1991. 286 pp. (n.p.)

RONALD GILL  
Delft University of Technology  
2600 GA Delft, the Netherlands

This book is a colorful account of an intimate love affair. Presenting more than 350 full-color photographs, its authors share their passion for the *landhuizen* of Curaçao and Bonaire with a growing number of people interested in the islands of the Netherlands Antilles. Their decision to focus on *landhuizen* (country estates) for the expression of their affection for the two islands is hardly accidental. It confirms that historic architecture can still successfully claim to be an expression of the islands' cultural identity, and this is also true for the other Caribbean islands. It is especially true of Curaçao, where the *landhuizen*, over one hundred in number, are spread over an area of a mere 444 square kilometers.

The *landhuizen* first actively received attention as characteristic examples of Dutch historic overseas architecture in the mid-1950s, when M.D. Ozinga made a survey of Curaçao's historic architecture. His findings were published in 1959 in what is still the standard work on Curaçao's monuments. As a historian he did not forget to arrange being accompanied by his long-time technical assistant, H. van der Wal, on his overseas survey. This resulted in a book containing the first extensive drawings of the *landhuizen*, allowing a more thorough study of their typology and historic architecture. Ozinga's study triggered quite a number of activities aimed at the conservation of Curaçao's historic architecture, many of them under the supervision of the illustrious Dutch conservationist C.L. Temminck Groll. But it took until 1986 for a scholarly study to appear; conducted by Michael Newton, it dealt with the architecture and building technology of Curaçao's *landhuizen*.

The *landhuizen* presented in Huijgers's and Ezechiëls's book in fact are a collection of a variety of smaller and larger country and plantation houses alike. The phrase *landhuis*, commonly used on Curaçao, was launched at the



beginning of this century. In Papiamentu, the *landhuis* is commonly referred to as *kas grandi*, meaning "great house," exactly the term used in Jamaica. Remarkably, the local name for the Dutch eighteenth-century *landhuizen* in the former Dutch East Indies is *besaran*, Indonesian for "big house" or "master's house," quite similar to its West Indian counterpart's name. Before that, the common name for *landhuis* was simply *huis* or *behuyzing*, corresponding with the same name for its counterpart found in former Dutch South Africa – strikingly resembling the Curaçao *landhuis* – and with *habitation*, the term used for plantation houses in the French Caribbean islands. For the more modest houses of Bonaire, the phrase *landhuis* is a more appropriate one. Here the typical Bonairian *kas di hadrei*, Papiamentu for gallery house, features a gallery or verandah on one or both sides and is used by the master, quite often an owner of a Curaçao plantation, as a place for rest and recreation.

This book is the second and extended edition of Huijgers's first book (*Landhuizen van Curaçao*), which was published in 1982. Now Bonaire is also included and, with an occasional exception, the *landhuizen* are presented in full color. It was meant to replace the all black-and-white first edition which, in the words of the author, suffered from many omissions and errors and from the questionable quality of the photographs. For this edition all photographs were updated. Each island essentially is dealt with in two sections. The first presents an introduction to the island's history, a short description of the plantation as a production unit, and a brief description of the types of *landhuizen*. The second is a catalogue of the *landhuizen* (93 in Curaçao and 9 in Bonaire). Some questions remain with respect to the consistency and clarity of this new edition. While the inclusion of brief fragments of literature can be useful in evoking the true atmosphere of a *landhuis*, it is of dubious value to present graphs and tables (e.g., on corn harvests and livestock) in the appendix, especially because the text of the introductory section already adequately deals with the information presented. Instead, inclusion of a plantation map of Curaçao would have been useful and more relevant to the book's aim and content. The sketches of the site and ground plan of quite a few of the *landhuizen* showing the spatial arrangement of typical buildings, such as corral, *magasina*, and rainwater cistern, are a welcome clarification to the serious reader. An indication of the scale is, however, badly missing. This is especially unfortunate because the plans are not printed in one scale. The bibliography contains a few errors and omissions. G. Schwartz is listed as the author of a book for which he (jointly with SDU) is the publisher. Also missing is the important contribution of Frans Booi on the development of the indigenous dwelling of Bonaire (1984), which explains the origin and development of the types of

dwelling on Bonaire. And finally, it must be a source of frustration for the authors that, while there has been some improvement, their goal of better quality in the photographs for this edition has not been fully realized. The photographs from the early 1970s are an exception to this.

The book suffers from the common weakness of directing attention to the narrow world of one audience and environment. The existence of similar cases on the other islands of the Caribbean is simply ignored. Reference to studies and cases beyond the targeted cultural domain has not been made. Yet the Caribbean is a melting pot of cultures for which exchange of information and comparative research extending beyond cultural boundaries is urgently needed in order both to understand the cultural and historical dimensions of the region's architecture and to appreciate its great diversity within a comparatively small territory.

Whatever its flaws, the true merit of this book is that it successfully displays the beauty and the typical characteristics of an endangered species of the architectural heritage of Curaçao and Bonaire, enlarging its crowd of supporters whose call for conservation surely will become stronger.

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*Colonial Transformations and the Decomposition of Dutch Plantation Slavery in Surinam.* WALDO HEILBRON. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Centre for Caribbean Studies (AWIC), University of Amsterdam, 1992. 133 pp. (Paper NLG 18.00)

ALEX VAN STIPRIAAN

Department of History and Fine Arts  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
3000 DR Rotterdam, the Netherlands

In 1982 Waldo Heilbron published his Ph.D thesis on the political economy of Suriname peasants after slavery. The first chapters of this thesis appeared in a separate booklet in 1981. Now, eleven years later, the latter has been translated into English, obviously to appeal to an international audience. In his preface, the author states that he wanted an opportunity to expand on concepts he was unable to cover in his first two books, and therefore "the present study reflects the state of my research at the moment (p. ii)."

This makes one wonder what kinds of changes a young neo-Marxist could have gone through since 1981 in his search for processes of colonial appropriation "and the way transformations in colonial society tend to take place in that connection" (p. i). It does not take long, however, to discover that our curiosity will not be satisfied, as this book is a literal translation – and a bad one at that – of the 1981-82 version, with only a few additions. Not only is this a major disappointment, but it also makes one wonder what the author means when he states that the amount of (secondary) sources at his disposal and the way he used them was partly dictated "by the time available to carry out the study" (p. ii).

Be this as it may, reading a book that, until now, has only been available in Dutch can still be worthwhile. The author aims to describe and analyze the structural changes that took place in Suriname during slavery, more specifically in the Suriname plantation economy between 1773 and 1863. During that period – and more frequently thereafter – there were, he discovered, various kinds of developments and changes pointing to the great transformation from slavery to free labor as a result of growing industrial capitalism. This explanation is a bit troublesome as industrial capital as such did not exist in Holland until the end of the nineteenth century, and the biggest and most technologically advanced plantation in Suriname at that time, Mariënborg, was still owned by the Dutch *Trading Company*. Obviously Heilbron is not interested in such historical details.

In any case, one sign of the transformation of labor relations, Heilbron says, was the way an image of the plantation economy in crisis had been

created. The desperate need for cheap labor was constantly underlined by serious reports and all sorts of calculations. This leads him to the conclusion "that 'factual accuracy' in the presentation of basically arbitrary (statistical and other) data, becomes ideology, when it functions as a support of certain classes or factions of classes, whose interests are at issue. In the methodology of studying Suriname slave society, the 'data' available, often presented in historical documentation as 'facts,' should be examined to ascertain whether or not they are reflections of social positions" (p. 33). Being critical of data, facts, and who-presents-them-how should be part of any historian's basic attitude, but after such a warning one becomes quite wary. As Heilbron treats his readers to quite a lot of quantitative data and "facts," his warning makes one curious about the material and methodology he has used.

It is a bit surprising, therefore, that in his description of the financial situation of the Suriname plantations during the third quarter of the eighteenth century the author relies mainly on a 1937 publication by Bloom, who wrote about the history of Jews in Amsterdam. The description of economic developments in Holland turns out to be based primarily on a 1902 work by the famous poet and socialist writer Henriëtte Roland Holst, and the history of the Dutch West India Company comes from the same Bloom in combination with a book entitled "The Land of Rembrandt" by the novelist Conrad Busken Huet, published in 1882!

Even more astonishing are the facts and data Heilbron uses to prove his great transformation. In his sketch of important technological changes affecting sugar plantations, he states that the first steam mills were introduced to Suriname in 1832, and that these gradually replaced the until-then-common animal-traction mills and windmills (p. 23). In reality the first steam mill was introduced some twenty years earlier. This type of mill gradually replaced the watermill, so typical of Suriname, which had been the generally applied and more productive replacement of animal-traction mills during the second and third quarter of the eighteenth century. No Suriname plantation has ever produced anything with a windmill!

And what about the following: Heilbron desperately wants to prove that during the eighteenth century the Suriname plantations had expanded, being "a reflection of operations of scale" (pp. 16-17). He therefore cites Anthony Blom's 1786 planters' handbook, noting that the average sugar plantation had no less than 228 slaves and that coffee plantations employed 247 slaves on average. In reality Blom mentioned 232 and 252 slaves respectively in a calculation of the theoretical profitability of the largest (!) estates in Suriname, whereas his guess for medium-sized estates came to 138 and 124 slaves respectively. For decades following the publication of Blom's book these figures only declined.

Heilbron's desire to prove the transformation to "operations of scale" and the dominance of sugar is so strong that it leads him to conclude that: "the middle of the eighteenth century saw a rapid expansion of sugar production on the plantations" (p. 123). In reality, between 1740 and 1780 the average sugar production in Suriname declined from 7,500 tons per year to 6,900 tons, whereas coffee exports rose from 1,500 to 7,200 tons during the same period.

It is easy to continue giving examples, for they pervade the book. Not to mention the sloppy quotations (for example Heilbron's own books are absent in the bibliography, Fouchard is quoted as 1972/1881, 1981, and 1982, whereas the bibliography only mentions 1981, etc.); and the historical blunders ("*three centuries* after the introduction of slavery in Suriname [i.e. 1650] Holland hesitantly began to embrace capitalism" (p. 60); or "*the feudal system* was introduced to Holland in the time of the Republic of the United Netherlands" (p. 77) [which was founded in 1578 and is often described as the first capitalist state!]).

And so on.

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ROSEMARIJN HOEFTE  
Department of Caribbean Studies  
KITLV/Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology  
2300 RA Leiden, the Netherlands

With great anticipation I started reading this nicely produced history of six generations of East Indian women in Suriname and the Netherlands. In 1873 the first generation left India for the plantations in Suriname. In total

34,000 East Indians migrated to Suriname. Following the expiration of their labor contracts, these migrants left the estates, but the great majority (66 percent) did not return to India, opting instead to become smallholders in their new country of residence. Yet the aspirations of most East Indians went further. Parents wanted their (male) children to climb the social and economic ladder and were willing to make great financial sacrifices for their schooling and training. These ambitions yielded rewards in the form of economic, social, and political power. Constitutional changes leading to Suriname's independence, however, threatened to put a spoke in the East Indian wheel. Adamantly opposed to independence and the uncertainty it would bring, East Indians left Suriname *en masse* for the Netherlands in the 1970s. At present approximately 70,000 descendants of the first generation of East Indian migrants are residing in the Netherlands.

Bea Lalmahomed interviewed forty-five women between the ages of 18 and 88, all living in the Netherlands. They discussed family systems, work, upbringing, religion, marriage and sexuality, and education and language. These interviews could have provided the author with fascinating information to serve as a basis for a much needed history of East Indian women.

Unfortunately, this book falls short of expectations. In the meager introduction – on the migration from India to Suriname and thence to the Netherlands – more than a century of profound cultural, social, and economic changes are covered in less than twelve pages. Not surprisingly then, one learns precious little about the lives of these women. The dearth of information is partially explained by a glance at the bibliography. The author has been exceedingly selective in reading secondary literature and seems not to be aware of many publications that have appeared during the last ten to fifteen years.

This lack of background may also account for some questionable statements made by both the interviewees and the author. One woman tells how her father became the first East Indian police agent as well as the first interpreter after the expiration of his contract (p. 110). The latter is unlikely as the colonial government, almost immediately after the arrival of the first immigrants, employed one or more interpreters, mostly *brahmins*. Lalmahomed accepts such testimonies at face value.

The author's conclusions are disputable as well. If she had actually read G. Mungra's *Hindoestaanse gezinnen in Nederland* (1990) – it is listed in the bibliography – she probably would not have written that Dutch is the first language of East Indian youth (p. 140). Research cited in Mungra (pp. 189-91) clearly shows that more than 65 percent of the children communicate in Sarnami (the lingua franca of the Suriname East Indians) with their parents as well as among themselves. Her conclusion that in 1946 more East Indian

girls than boys received a secondary education – 251 students of whom 137 were girls – surprised me very much. Checking her source, C.J.M. de Klerk's classic study *De immigratie der Hindostanen in Suriname* (1953), I found that Lalmohomed cites the correct number of East Indian students, but that there were only 68 female students (p. 200). It would have been helpful if she had pointed out that the East Indian students made up 11 percent of the total student body.

Which brings us to an even greater problem: this study is presented in a vacuum. The author does not enlighten the reader as to how and why she has selected the interviewees. Neither does she give any additional information about these women. Who are they? One is left in the dark about their geographical origin in Suriname, their place of residence in the Netherlands, their education, profession, social class, and networks. The only thing Lalmahomed "reveals" is that "most of the East Indian women who migrated to the Netherlands [it is unclear whether she means the interviewees or all migrants] originated from the capital of Paramaribo and several districts" (p. 23). In short, they come from all over Suriname. Furthermore, one would like to see the experiences of the East Indians compared with other women from Suriname, with Javanese in particular. How did these women – who first arrived as contract laborers in Suriname in 1890 – adjust to rapidly changing conditions?

Lalmahomed emphasizes the growing autonomy of East Indian women. The younger generations are more self-willed than their mothers and grandmothers. Such a conclusion is hardly surprising. The absence of thorough background information and a meaningful context gives *Hindostaanse vrouwen* a limited anecdotal quality only.

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*Antilliaans spreekwoordenboek*. PETER HOEFNAGELS & SHON WÉ HOOGENBERGEN. Amsterdam: Thomas Rap, 1991. 92 pp. (Paper NLG 19.50)

AART G. BROEK  
Fundashon Pierre Lauffer  
P.O. Box 4221  
Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles

Just like any other society in the New World, Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire boast a long tradition of texts which were handed down orally. Stories, songs, tales, proverbs, rhymes, riddles, jokes, aphorisms, (ritual) formulas, slogans, recipes and the like came down to us from earlier centuries. Quite a few of these texts had traveled seas, surviving the Middle Passage with their treasurers, and were adapted to local circumstances. Others originated on the islands or were adaptations of texts from elsewhere in the Americas or from Europe.

It is only at the end of the last century that we begin to find some rare attempts at recording texts from oral tradition (e.g., Jesurun 1899). The scarcity of recordings may well be indicative of the extent to which the oral tradition was still a *living* tradition. The oral tradition seems to have been so much part of everyday life that one just did not recognize its value. When in the first decades of this century the editor of the Roman Catholic weekly *La Cruz* occasionally asked readers to contribute proverbs in Papiamentu, he would publish those that nicely corroborated – or at least did not defy – particular Roman Catholic moral principles. Willem E. Kroon (1886-1949), the author of half a dozen *romans á thèse* in Papiamentu, would extensively deploy local proverbs for the same reason. His novel *Yiu di su mama, o castigo di un abuso* (A Mother's Child, or Castigation of an Abuse [1929/30]), to give but one example, abounds with proverbs to bring home his Roman Catholic message. The mission's particular concern with proverbs ultimately resulted in a collection of over one thousand "proverbionan papiamento" (1946), presented alphabetically and in other respects indiscriminately ordered.

By that time, however, the interest in recording the oral tradition was no longer primarily nourished by religious motives. From the 1920s on, oral forms were rapidly undermined and replaced by more modern means of communication. This actually constituted but one of the many sweeping consequences of the rapid socio-economic and cultural changes that the arrival of the oil-refinery, between 1915 and 1918, triggered. In 1937, Father Latour warned that "it was high time to record the remnants, for any delay entailed that soon there would be no more good story-tellers left" (*Amigoe*



*di Curaçao*, May 1, 1937). Latour set himself to recording Anansi-stories and published over two dozen *kuentanan di Nanzi* in the predecessor of the present journal, the *West Indische Gids* (1937-40) – unfortunately in Dutch, forgetting (?) to leave us the original versions in Papiamentu. As Latour certainly did not favor the moral of the stories (see Latour 1948), this missionary's concern for a dying tradition was clearly not motivated by religious interests.

His contributions to the *WIG* were partly a response to a particular academic demand from the colonial mother country for articles on the folklore and oral traditions of its Caribbean territories. The volumes of those years contain an extraordinary number of articles about Afro-Caribbean cultural phenomena in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. However, in addition, a certain local distrust of contemporary developments and of strong European socio-cultural influences (of a non-religious kind) also underscored the necessity to record Afro-Antillean folklore and oral tradition before they were washed away completely. Without succumbing to a romanticized view of the Afro-Antillean past and heritage, Father Latour, and after him, Father Brenneker, Elis Juliana, Nilda Pinto, Nicolaas van Meeteren, and Antoine Maduro – to mention the best known – dedicated years to careful recording of the “remnants,” in writing and/or on tape. Maduro published various volumes of well-wrought studies on proverbs, sayings, and expressions in Papiamentu (1959, 1960, 1969).

In 1980 Hoefnagels – a Dutch senator and law professor, and in both functions a frequent visitor to the Dutch Antillean islands for more than twenty years – published a collection of Papiamentu proverbs and sayings, to which he added literal translations and explanations in Dutch. His most important informant had been W.M. “Shon Wé” Hoogenbergen, a native speaker of Papiamentu with a wide but non-professional knowledge of this language. The book was locally published and immediately criticized severely. Despite his substantial work on Papiamentu proverbs, Maduro (1981) again took the trouble to point out and correct the incredible number of mistakes in the book. He could not but conclude that the collection was “un bon buki pa manda papiamentu kompletamente den abismo” (“a good book to condemn Papiamentu to bottomless perdition”).

A Dutch literary publisher took care of a new edition of the Hoefnagels/Hoogenbergen collection a decade after its first publication. What moves a transient visitor to the Dutch Antilles – Shon Wé died in 1990 – to brush aside virtually everything Maduro stated in 1981, had written in previous publications, and recently presented in a comparative study of proverbs (Maduro 1990)? Hoefnagels was wise enough to leave out many a definite and indefinite article in Papiamentu proverbs that should not have been

there in the first edition, but Maduro's further remarks on the phrasing, meaning, syntax, and spelling are generally completely ignored.

The fact that Papiamentu is in the process of being standardized does *not* mean that it can be written in any way imaginable – certainly not after the publication of a Papiamentu-Dutch dictionary (Joubert 1991) and the lists of words by the Komishon Standarisashon di Papiamentu (Commission for the Standardization of Papiamentu) (1985-91). Hoefnagels or his Dutch publisher would not think of publishing a serious book in Dutch in their own idiosyncratic Dutch spelling, would they? Or, at least not without justifying a particular deviant orthography. Undoubtedly Maduro's studies tend to have a *prescriptive* character, while Hoefnagels's claims to hold on to what his informant had said and heard – a somewhat more *descriptive* tendency. But should not Maduro's "alternatives" then have been given at least some room in Hoefnagels's book?

Hoefnagels does not take a sixty-year-old tradition of local research seriously, which is most regrettable. The new edition of *Antilliaans spreekwoordenboek* does not condemn Papiamentu to bottomless perdition, as Maduro has it. Fortunately, far more is required. It does, however, completely blur Curaçao cultural phenomena which, according to the preface, Hoefnagels is after and is so eager to convey to his fellow countrymen.

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